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ISSUE 24 SPRING 2007

FIGHTING TALK FROM BRISTOL AND THE SOUTH WEST

£1.20



plus...

BRISTLING IN BATH.

GUNS IN ACADEMIES.

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**9 OUT OF 10 FAT CATS
PREFER NEW LABOUR**

bristle

c/o kebele
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Please send us articles etc
for Bristle 25



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bristle is an alternative publication for Bristol and the South West aiming to provide a space and information for local groups and activists. Think locally, act globally, and vice versa. bristle invites everyone campaigning locally for different issues to send us their stuff. Contact us if you want to take part. bristle is self-funded, and any money made is invested in the magazine and other free-information activities. bristle is independant - we don't belong to any party, current or group. People writing for bristle don't necessarily agree with all the articles or content of the magazine. bristle is committed to creating an alternative media to the local and national brainwashers and manipulators. bristle is committed to the distribution of information and to creating revolution and an alternative to capitalism.

support bristle!

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Bristle is a 'quarterly' magazine that has generally come out about three times a year since 1997. The mag is produced by a voluntary collective and we always welcome help with editing and layout, written contributions, graphics, distribution, fund-raising, enthusiasm and bad jokes.

CALLING ALL DESIGNERS / DESK TOP PUBLISHERS!

We are currently particularly short of designer/DTPers. We'd love to hear from you. Bristle meets every fortnight at 5.30 on alternate Sundays at Kebele, 14, Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY. Email us to confirm exact dates (editors@bristle.org.uk). Informal chats and food at the Kebele Kafe afterwards.

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Sell 10 copies to your mates and get your copy free. (See the best things in life really are free.)

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SEND IT TO US WITH THIS FORM TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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OF TONY BLAIR**

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Welcome, friends, to Bristle number 24, our sort-of-quarterly offering of alternative media, fighting back the evil forces of capitalism and intolerance. Since our last issue we have moved from nationalism, to national government.

May 1997 seems like quite a long time ago now. The voters pinned their hopes on a shiny, new re-branded government with a smiley leader. They promised a welcome change from Tory rule, misery, and sleaze. They didn't deliver, leading us to question whether we should devote this issue's special to ten years of New Labour, or twenty-eight years of Thatcherism. Forgetting their socialist roots, New Labour's time in office has shown them to be every bit as bad as the last lot, and that the issue is not what colour the government is, but government itself. Ironically, the Tories' warning was right - New Labour, new danger.

The fat cats have got fatter and we all know that Blair betrayed his promises, lied, and jumped into bed with Bush. We give you a critique of the pledges that New Labour made back in '97, and discuss the ways in which they failed to deliver on them. Although it all sounds a bit negative, and we do need to change things for the better, we don't want you to get the impression that the alternatives in Westminster are what we had in mind - Blair led us astray, but Cameron or Campbell won't do any different. You can change the packaging, but they are all just politicians.



The last decade hasn't all been bad, though. To counter the negativity we also consider ten years of radical opposition to New Labour, have got some news from resistance in Bristol and the South West, reports on solidarity further afield, reviews, and the marking of Corporate Watch's tenth anniversary. And there's another anniversary coming up: ten years of Bristle! Next issue will look at the evolution of our humble mag and all the positive things that have been happening in Bristol and the South West, and the world in that time. Stay tuned for the next enthralling instalment!

:- The Bristle Collective

Getcha
Bristle T-shirts
here!



available now, for an absurdly cheap
5 quid! (or 6 quid with p&p)

Design has the bristle header and the words 'bristling with anger & desire' underneath.

Men's are black, sizes M or L. More fitted style (Women's) are red or brown, size 12/14.

If you'd like one sent in the post, send us 6 quid (cheque made payable to "bristle") to: bristle, c/o kebele, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY. Don't forget to tell us which size and colour you want.

Also available from yer bristle friends, or otherwise
via the Kebele infoshop, Saturdays 11am - 2pm.

Alliance against the South Bristol Ring Road

Remember the Avon Ring Road protest at Siston Common in the 1990s? North Bristol's ring road was eventually built, along with 3,000 new houses on green belt land. The next part of this scheme is the South Bristol Ring Road (SBRR), a dual carriageway, which is planned to join the Avon ring road at Long Ashton, joining the A370 to the A38 to Hengrove roundabout, Whitchurch, Hartcliffe and Stockwood, to Hicks Gate.

The SBRR has been in discussion for the last 30 years, but it is only since 2005 that it became concrete, (or tarmac) when plans were included in a report commissioned by the unelected (not even faking-it democratic) quango the South West Regional Assembly. The report, The Greater Bristol Transport Study produced by the Government Office of the South West (another unelected body), then had its recommendations incorporated into the official Joint Local Transport Plan.

The Alliance against the SBRR, up in October 2005, argues that the road is environmentally damaging both to communities and the green belt. Mike Landen, founder of the Alliance, refutes council arguments that the road is necessary to regenerate South Bristol, as well as providing better access to Bristol Airport. 'At best this road represents a total saving of only one minute from existing journeys from the city centre to the airport,' he says. 'The existing ring road is already heavily congested at peak times, undoubtedly the SBRR would make the existing ring road even worse.'

Final plans for the SBRR have not yet been agreed but work on the design for the first part of the proposal has already started. Although the cost of the route hasn't yet been agreed it will be over £140 million, which will go to private developers. The campaign argues that climate change makes it crucial that this money is put into sustainable public transport systems. A recent petition against the road locally gathered 2,300 signatures and the Alliance are lobbying Bristol and North Somerset councils opposing the plans. 'If you want to regenerate South Bristol,' says Mike, 'you don't put a dual carriageway right through the middle of it.'

Ffi: www.southbristolringroad.co.uk

Sophia Constantia



Spanish Civil War Veteran supports PCS Strike in Taunton

The following report was received from our comrades in Taunton:

The Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) picket line outside the Department of Work and Pensions/ Child Support Agency Building in Taunton High St in January, staffed by PCS members from the Charity Commission, Revenue and Customs, Hydrographic Agency, as well as the DWP.

Supporting the picket in the photo is former hospital trades unionist Howard Andrews, who was 100 on February 15th 2007. Howard Andrews is the oldest of the 20 remaining survivors of the British contingent of the International Brigades who volunteered to help fight the Spanish Civil War against Franco from 1936 to 1939.

Dave Chapple

Save Bristol's Castle Park

Castle Park and St Mary le Port are still under threat from development. The initial set of options, and the 'favoured' Option 4, which would have destroyed the park as we know it, have been shelved, but the push for development is still very real.

The latest plan is that Deeley Freed, the council's developers, will employ the services of George Ferguson, an architect who had a hand in designs such as Millennium Square and The Tobacco Factory. His job initially is to liaise with 'interested parties' such as the Civic Society and Castle Park Users group, the purpose of which is, presumably, to reach some consensus (of opinion) on what will happen to our park. Hopefully this is not side-stepping the procedure of full and open, not to mention unbiased, public consultation. The previous consultation, by deliberately misrepresenting the possible 'loss of green space', created an apparent majority in favour of building on the park. This is all taking time, and it is being said that no planning application will go before the council until the summer. But keep your eyes peeled!

A point to note, the newly named St Mary le Port is simply the end of Castle Park incorporating the derelict buildings. The council and developers have been very keen to create this division of the park into two areas, so be aware that references to St Mary le Port do mean Castle Park and if this area is to be first for development, that it does contain green space and mature trees and that any new buildings here can be as high as 6 or 7 storeys.

Ffi: <http://savecastlepark.co.uk/>

By Helen



The March of the Cranes – building works close in on one of Bristol's last city centre green spaces

Shoot the Merchants

First there was Merchants Quarter - now we have Merchants Academy over in Withywood. From September 2008, the Merchants Venturers will be a major part of the independent trust that will run the new academy, replacing Withywood Community School and opening in September 2008. Bristol City Council has granted planning consent for the Academy following a period of alleged 'extensive' public consultation.

Yes! The fine upstanding citizens that we know the Merchants Venturers are, will be entrusted with the education of our children. Denis Burn, Chairman of the Academy Trust, states that the academy 'will give the young people of Withywood truly outstanding educational opportunities and will have a transforming effect on the area.'

You betcha Denis! An on-site Youth Club and an integrated Army Cadet Force that will be open outside normal school hours, and be available to all local young people. Sounds great, we all feel that young people need discipline and an ethos of teamwork instilled into them.

But hang on, are we right to be concerned about the fact that the Academy will include a shooting range! Pardon us for being PC - but is there not a major problem with knife and gun crime amongst 13-17 year-olds? So the solution is to show them how to shoot better?

Councillor Jos Clark, Bristol City Council's Executive Member for Children, has said: 'The sponsors are serious about attainment, opportunity and raising aspirations in South Bristol. As a councillor who lives and serves in the south of the city, it is very encouraging to see such significant investment in local children's future.'

A not-so-little bird told me that at least one contractor has pulled out of the project because their staff - Women and Black and Minority Ethnic have apparently endured or observed abusive behaviour; allegedly of a racist and sexist nature, allegedly perpetrated by representatives of the Merchant Venturers!

Will Cllr. Clark raise this with the Merchants? Oh sorry! Since they don't have any women members, she'll probably have to get one of her male colleagues to do it for her.

Cheers Drive!!

Adi Vocate

Packer's Field Update

Those of you who live in the Whitehall area are probably all too aware of the current state of Packer's Field. As you might recall, its current owners the City Academy have fenced off the field, which, until recently, local people had been used by local people for generations. The Academy plan to create a number of football pitches on the field, build changing room facilities, a pavilion and a car park for over 50 vehicles. They are also waiting to submit plans for a running track with floodlights, which Academy principal Ray Priest hopes will form a 'state of the art' sports hub site for schools in East Bristol.

Except it's a complete mess at the moment and looks more like a 'state of the art' World War One battlefield, complete with waterlogged trenches. Having removed the top soil, it seems that the contractors have sussed too late that Packer's has severe drainage problems. Work ceased on the site in November and at the time of writing hasn't recommenced.

To make matters worse there are gaps in the fence that the contractors erected: an open invitation for kids wanting to cut through between Whitehall and Greenback. Awaiting them on the field are a number of large craters. It doesn't take a genius to work out this is probably breaking every health and safety regulation under the sun. Tests have also shown that Packer's soil has high levels of arsenic, lead and hydrocarbons - safe if it's covered by grass but poisonous if dug up and blown around the locality.

A group of local people are still kicking up a fuss about all this. In the end the Academy may well get its gleaming new sports facility but we are determined to secure free community access outside of school hours. This is most likely to be won as a Community Use Agreement, a legal document that the school has to sign before the field can be used again. At present the Academy are still in negotiations about the Agreement. Local people are also preparing to fight the Academy on the proposed athletics facility, which would surely swallow up the last remaining land that could be set aside for free open use.

The battle isn't over. It's not yet time to stop being angry about Packer's Field.

Will Simpson

Ffi: www.packersfield.org.uk



Photo: Bristle
Packers Field - currently a building site, not a rifle range.



Know Thy Enemy! 10 years of corporate watching

The UK's leading anti-corporate research group, Corporate Watch UK, celebrated its 10th anniversary this February, by hosting the 'Corporate Crime Awards' in Oxford, and launching a Poetry Anthology.

In fact the idea that emerged as CW first appeared in 1995 as DBFO, or Destroy! Burn! Fell! Obliterate! Which was in itself a pisstake of the government departments behind the Design Build Finance & Operate (yep, DBFO) road schemes of the mid-1990's. The vibrant anti-roads direct action movement of the early 1990's had noticed the same company names occurring with each new project, and wanted to know more. And suitably armed, the struggle spread from occupying land about to be trashed, to occupying the road builders offices, and sometimes trashing them. A good lesson to learn.

After that one-off publication, CW formally unleashed itself as a regular magazine a year later, and from 1997 as an on-line presence too. Since then they have maintained an astonishing hit rate of dirt digging and fact finding, taking in corporations across the spectrum and the globe, from privatisers to GM scams, and more recently supermarkets and profiteers from the war on us all. Alongside that work they have provided diy guides for activists and briefings on corporate law. In 1999 they helped with 'Squaring up to the square mile', the activists guide book to the City of London, that came in very useful during the J18 Carnival against Capitalism.

So help Corporate Watch and help yourself. Check out their publications & website, and get digging!

More info: www.corporatewatch.org.uk

mh

"The earth is not dying - it is being killed. And those who are killing it have names and addresses."

- Utah Phillips

There are two types of software in this world, Free and Proprietary. As activists, we should use Free software wherever possible. Many of us claim to be anarchists but the software we use to run our lives, to design, to express ourselves is controlled by manipulative corporations; proprietary software.

Freedom in software is about common ownership. Free software is not about getting software for no charge. Shareware and Freeware aren't free. You can tell this about a piece of software because of how it's licensed, the GPL (General Public License) is an excellent example of a free copyleft license.

Some of us consider that using Microsoft (M\$) software is good because "I didn't pay for it", but when individuals start to expect proprietary software, institutions are then forced to buy it. You are paying for this stuff through tax whether you buy it or not. It's crucial not to encourage the use of corporate controlled software.

When we pass on skills concerning proprietary software we are in effect saying "I expect you to either buy this or nick it". We can pass on the skills for free, but the software demands a payment. On a personal level we might be happy to steal the software we need, but to force this on others is unfair, especially when there are such good alternatives.

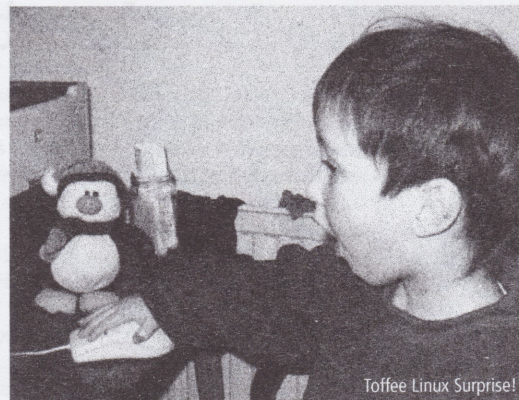
Free software is better than proprietary for most applications. Get ready for a world where there are no viruses, where bugs get fixed and where we tell the corporates what we want and they listen. Really, this is all happening now.

There are over 200,000 people paid to write free software, but most of the writers do it voluntarily in their free time. We have GNU/Linux to run our computers, Scribus for Desktop Publishing, office suites galor, GIMP and Inkscape for our graphics. This is a huge movement, a strong and vibrant community that we are proud of.

Free software computer sessions at the Kebele Café are on Wednesdays 7:30 to 9:00, including machine building and Linux installations.

Also check www.bristolwireless.net for Linux software

Ben Green



Toffee Linux Surprise!

WHATS ON AT KEBELE

Spanish conversation class

Every Monday 6.30 - 8pm

¿Habras Espanol un poquito? Improve your basic Spanish skills with this conversation class. Spanish for beginners could also be offered if there is enough interest.

Chess club

Every Monday 6.30 - 9.30pm

Are you the next Viswanathan Anand or just someone who knows that the little pieces are called 'pawns' not 'prawns'? Meet and play locals of all abilities. Beginners class also available.

Bike workshop

Every Wednesday Noon - 4.30pm

Throwing away an old bike? DON'T! Our band of able and willing volunteers may be able to fix it and save you a lot of money. We also fix minor problems and have a store of spares available. Volunteers welcome, training available time permitting.

Computer workshop

Every Wednesday 7 - 9.30pm

Replacing a PC because your old one has a problem? DON'T! The problem may be minor and we can show YOU how to fix it. Every Wednesday we run a tutorial where you can learn more about how your PC works and how to get more out of it.

Screen printing workshop

Every Thursday 7 - 9pm

Bursting with artistic ideas? Want to print your own t-shirts, posters or artwork? Well now you can! We will show you how to prepare, create and then print your own designs on anything you want (as long as its flat!)

Open mic night

First Friday of every Month 8 - 11pm

California sound, folk, unplugged punk, mandolin mayhem, busker rock, every night it's different! So kick back in the crowd and smooth away the wrinkles or bring your instrument and show us what you've got, we're always supportive of new talent.

Saturday breakfast

Every Saturday 11am - 2pm

Heavy sesh last night? Fancy getting away from it all for a couple of hours? Getting ready to go up The Gas? Come along and enjoy a 'Full Vegan English' breakfast in pleasant company, at very cheap prices. Just the job! Volunteer cooks welcome.

Infoshop

Every Saturday 11am - 2pm

Come down to the Infoshop and find out what the papers and TV won't tell you, about politics, the environment, Bristol's radical history, and much, much more. We also sell 'radical chic' t-shirts, stickers and patches. Ammunition for the mind!

Kebele cafe

Every Sunday, 6pm - 9.30pm

The Kebele Cafe serves a single dish (rather than a menu), and is a chance to get a tasty, nutritious vegan (no meat or animal by-products) meal very cheaply. Suggested donation: £2 for a meal, 50p for tea and coffee. Volunteer cooks welcome!

SEE www.kebelecoop.org FOR MORE DETAILS

Breastfeeding:

Bristol Mum says Stop the Harassment!

In Norfolk a woman was asked by a policeman to stop breastfeeding in public, as it caused offence. Why did a man who for a living wears a replica of a breast on his head object to a woman breastfeeding in public? Why is it socially acceptable to feed a child milk from a cow who has probably had all number of chemicals injected into her and whose milk is designed for rapid weight gain rather than brain growth? And who wants to eat in the loo?

Unfortunately, there is no law to protect breastfeeding mothers unless you live in Scotland where the new Breastfeeding Act makes it an offence to 'deliberately stop or prevent a child up to the age of two from being breastfed in a public place or licensed premises'.

Is it consumerism? Is it because we are trained to spend money and buy things when we feel the need to take control of our lives? Adverts make us doubt our selves and there is comfort in the control of measuring, weighing, heating.....and seeing what actually goes into a baby. There is not much money in breastfeeding, sales of bras and breast-pads will never reach the multi-billion dollar empires of the formula companies.

We are not taught to believe in our bodies, in the power they have to produce the very best a child can have in terms of nutrition and protection; mother's milk.

Breastfeeding reduces the chances of developing allergies and boosts the immune system to protect them from illness throughout their lives. So, logically, if more babies were breastfed, less babies would be ill and more midwives and health visitors would have the time to support mothers who found it difficult to breastfeed. It doesn't happen that way though because bottle feeding is seen as the norm and breastfeeders are asked to move to the toilet (Ikea) and spat on while they feed their

babies in their cars (Cribbs Causeway). Admittedly Ikea did at the time have a nursing room but it stank of poo because it was also the baby changing room. Nice.

I'd like breastfeeding to be respected and honoured. It's hugely depressing that mums are humiliated and penalised for doing the best thing for their children and for their countries health.



Maybe one day the policeman will ask the formula feeder to move on, to move their embarrassing habit into a private place. Maybe one day the world will realize that there are commercial benefits to breastfeeding in the radical reduction of costs to health services later in life. Breastfed babies grow into adults with less diabetes, less heart disease, less allergies and apparently a bigger IQ. I wonder if the outraged policeman was breastfed.

Watch out for live breastfeeding window displays in the Southbank Bristol Arts Trail that happily coincides with National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 12-19 May 2007.

Lisa Cole

www.lactivist.net

Network for Lactation Activists with Current Breastfeeding Campaigns and Breastfeeding Awareness Week Listings

www.southbank-bristol.co.uk
Southbank Bristol Arts Trail

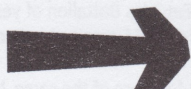
Dry T-shirt Competition



Spring is in the air so win yourself some radical chic with Bristle's t-shirt competition. Yes you can be the proud owner of one of Bristle's new t-shirts (see page 1), and it's very easy. Look at the stencil graffiti image here, that is popping up all over Bristol, and then tell us what the acronym S.W.A.T stands for. Is it:



- A: Smacked with a truncheon
- B: Socialist women against testosterone
- C: South west against Tories
- D: Special weapons and tactics
- E: Single women against threesomes
- F: South Wales anarchist tendency
- G: Silly wankers and tossers
- H: South west anarchist techno
- I: Stephen Williams MP against trotskyists
- J: Socialist workers against Trident
- K: Squatter womens action team



To enter, drop us a line by post or email, headed 'Bristle t-shirt comp', stating which is the correct answer. Don't forget to give us your name & address, and tell us if you are M/F and size wanted. Draw date is 4 May 2007 to coincide with election results. First correct entry drawn out of our riot cop helmet is the winner!

BRISTLING in B

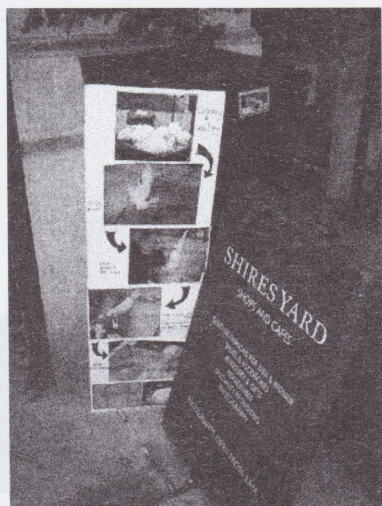
Anti-Fur Demo

During the winter months animal rights activists have again been fighting the fur trade and ensuring it stays off the shelves at fashion outlets. Bristol activists quickly identified the shops selling fur and one afternoon put an end to fur being sold in Bristol with the use of loud demos outside each shop. Attention was then turned to Bath where the activists there had not been so fortunate. There are now only a couple of shops in Bath still selling real skins and most attention has been focused on AH. They sell mostly rabbit fur but claim it to be ethical, as they believe the rabbits may also be used for meat. We have been doing demos outside to remind them that fur is never ethical and we won't take any pathetic excuses for abusing animals.

Police have been typically biased, arresting activists for holding posters, which cause offence to some people. The 'some people' turned out to be the shop owner and her stupid staff. We did complain that fur was offensive but the cops weren't interested. On one occasion stink bombs were thrown at the shop throughout the day. This not only upset the staff but also was effective as it put customers off wanting to go anywhere near it. Of course as with all demos you do get constructive criticism from the public. One lady wearing a mink coat claimed 'it's ok because it's machine washable'. How can you argue against that? She of course has not evolved from cave man times and clearly had the IQ of a primitive oaf.

AH have made it clear they will continue selling fur through winter but reassure us that it won't feature in their summer range (well thanks, all those years of hot summers and fur coats are over at last). We will continue the demos until either they adopt a more ethical approach to sales or until we ruin their business.

Rich Mac



GIG REVIEW:

Attila the Stockbroker / Dave Rovics / The Clap
The Porter Butt pub, Bath,
February 12 2007

The grimy back room of the Butt echoed to the sound of folk guitar this night, the place chocker with lefties, its rusty Esso sign obscured by an outbreak of protest banners, past and present. The night begins, and Henry opens up proceedings with a short set of guitar, songs & poems of a decidedly red nature. The audience is warmed.

Another local act, folk rap duo of Dexter Sosay on vocals & Ally on acoustic guitar. They're called 'The Clap', so cue lots of gonorrhoea jokes. Sweet. Dexter forms one third of Bristol hip-hop group 'British Intelligence', and carries on much in the same vein, but stepping up the social commentary, with an acoustic flavour. Things start slow, audience expectations subtly shifting. But shit, these boys are good. Concise, intelligent locomotive delivery of rap, politically astute and pissed off, yeah. Dexter's arms are doing some strange robotic looking dance, but that don't matter, coz this stuff's so powerful my hair stands on end. One last self-deprecating, modest comment from the duo, who don't seem to realise the grip the crowd are under, then peaking with last track 'Trident'. The room yells for more. Check them out. The Clap, in some ways, could have stole the show, if not for the blinding performances put on by the headliners.

Brighton punk poet Attila follows, the ante now officially upped. Despite the alcohol level, he jams a lot more energy and punch to this set than previous 'Butt visits have seen, varying the routine between the funny and the fuming, with a look-in from rarer poems, as well as the golden oldies. And the guy's been going 27 years, mind, and still has the audience, both new and regulars, bursting with laughter and applause. The world can consider itself firmly set to rights, and crowd pleaser after crowd pleaser hits home. Trainspotting MCs, celebrity bores and (as ever) Green Day covers bands, you name it.

Attila & Dave Rovics are on joint tour of the UK at the moment, so they're taking turns. So now we swing round to the yank. Rovics, radical folk singer from Massachusetts, kinda sums it up: instantly catchy singalongs, tear jerker sad numbers, songs of love, land and liberty, they're his forte. Unlike Attila, there is something of a youthful optimism from Dave, a belief in basic goodness, the human angle. From the St Patrick's Battalion of yesteryear, the urban community gardeners of today, oil wars, to ELF arson, shouts of 'Burn it down!' Yeah, he's a better anarchist than you.

Attila comes back on for more of the same, but Rovics get the last word on this great night, his classic, a harbinger of this coming summer's clashes: 'Shut Them Down'. And of course we will, when we're not hitting the real ale in some beloved Bathonian dive. See you there.

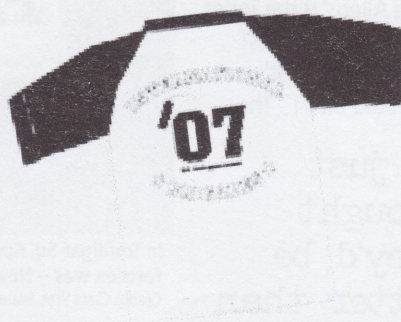
By Pink

When the G8 met at Gleneagles on 6 July 2005, the biggest demo outside Scotland was in the south west, in Bristol.
Pic: thomblower



SUMMIT TO RIOT HOME ABOUT

In Bristle issues 18-20 we carried a lot of info & reports about the G8 summit in Scotland in July 2005. But poverty wasn't made history, and the G8 didn't go away. It just went to Russia, the hosts for 2006, who ensured that very few protesters got anywhere near it. This year the G8 is hosted by Germany, and the main summit in June looks like being a hot one. Our Bath correspondent Led Astray is getting very excited...



German protests always go off with a big bang!

Never mind the shoddy puns – this summer, the G8, the rulers of the 8 most industrialised/richest nations, comes to Heiligendamm, in north Germany (near to Rostock). The summit will take place, ostensibly, to address poverty, environmental catastrophe, and other humanitarian-seeming concerns, no doubt, but it's all a paper-thin sham. Again and again, the way is paved for the erosion of civil liberties, spread of war, concentration of capital, complete and utter exploitation on every level imaginable. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the powerful fortify their own prestige. But we're not about to let them go unopposed.

The Germans get mobilising

'Camp Inski' was held last summer, an international gathering in Germany of activists opposed to the machinations of these self-styled 'world leaders'; and they've been busy. The German activists have been organising like crazy. Comprised of mainstream NGOs (not half as servile and farcical as Geldof's 'Make Poverty History'), anti-fascists, anti-globalisation activists, socialists and anarchists, they've been putting out info, maps and calls to action left, right and centre, and holding regular nationwide & international gatherings.

Now the UK wing of Dissent! is rolling into action. They met up in late January, and that meeting's given birth to various working groups: blockades groups (aiming to totally disrupt the necessary summit infrastructure of kitchen staff, translators and envoys – stop the summit before it starts), logistics groups, transport groups, medics groups, legal groups, media & communications, as well as infopoints around the UK. The UK network was due to meet again in March, so get involved now.

Police state prepares for invasion by outraged citizens

Already in Heiligendamm, the town and its 280 inhabitants have been absorbed into a tightly-controlled red zone, bordered by a concrete-sunk, razor-wire tipped 2.5 metre tall fence, 13 km long, and patrolled by 15,000 police. Whilst a steady stream of protests, arson and paintbombs falls upon the corporate enclaves in Germany, you can

bet the state will be turning its attention to the activists! Upto 30,000 protesters are expected to try and camp near the summit, with 100,000 expected for the main protests:

- Saturday June 2 – opening demo in Rostock
- June 3 – anti-military actions at the Wittstock bombing range
- June 4 – action day on immigration and border controls
- June 5 – environmentalist blockade of Rostock-Laage airport
- June 6 – beginning of G8 summit – blockades ahoy!
- June 7 – more blockades, both autonomous, and en masse
- June 8 – last day of the summit

Get involved, fight the G8. We've a world to gain. More info:

<http://dissentnetzwerk.org/> - main German site in many languages
<https://hamburg.dissentnetzwerk.org/> - info & convergence centre in Hamburg

<http://dissent.org.uk/> - UK info

Bath/Avon mailing list – contact whoseworld_ourworld@yahoo.co.uk

Free G8 info available from Kebele social centre, along with a benefit CD and booklet.

Led Astray

OBITUARY:

Tim Sebastian (1948-2007)



Tim Sebastian, a comrade from Bath, or as he may have preferred Caer Badon, has died at Southmead Hospital in February, aged 59. Tim was a familiar presence at events in Wessex in his many guises as warrior of Stonehenge, 'Archdruid' of the Secular Order of Druids in Wiltshire, fellow of the Bladud Society, Solsbury reveller and supporter of Bath Reclaim the Streets, antiquarian picnicker and lover of cyder and aboriginal cricket. An important part of his legacy was to help found the Bardic Chair of Caer Badon (Bath) in 1996. His commitment was such that he discharged himself from hospital to attend the bard of Bath ceremony in December.

The picture shows Tim (standing centre with cap) with friends celebrating mass public access to Stonehenge at the summer Solstice 2000, for the first time since the notorious police riot at the Battle of the Beanfield in 1985.

Steve



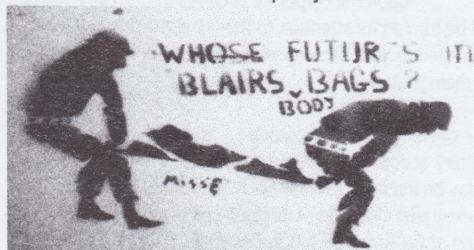
SPECIAL: How Much Longer?

10 years of New Labour, 28 years of Thatcherite politics

The 1st of May 2007 is the 10th anniversary of New Labour's sweeping election victory that ended 18 years of Tory rule. In our special feature activists & Bristle contributors reflect on how New Labour measure up to their promises of 10 years ago (see box). We kick off with a comment from one of the activists who founded Bristle magazine back in the summer of '97. **JOHN SERPICO** looks back, and ahead...

Following the New Labour election victory in 1997, a bunch of us gathered at The Queen's Head pub in Easton to witness another earth-shattering performance of local top pop beat combo The Living Legends. Just prior to their 'performance', comedian and compere for the evening Tony Allen took to the stage and asked of the audience: "So, did anyone here vote for New Labour?" One lone, solitary man raised his hand. "Why?" Tony Allen asked incredulously. "I just thought they'd be better than the Tories." The man shrugged. "Are you mad?" exclaimed Allen "If the Tories had got in again there would have been rioting in the streets! There would have been revolution! Anarchy! And now that's not gonna happen because people like you have voted Blair!" The man looked around for some support but none was forthcoming and instead, "I just thought they'd be better than the Tories."

Those were desperate days indeed. The Conservatives had been in power for 18 years and for all sense and purpose, Britain had become a one party state.

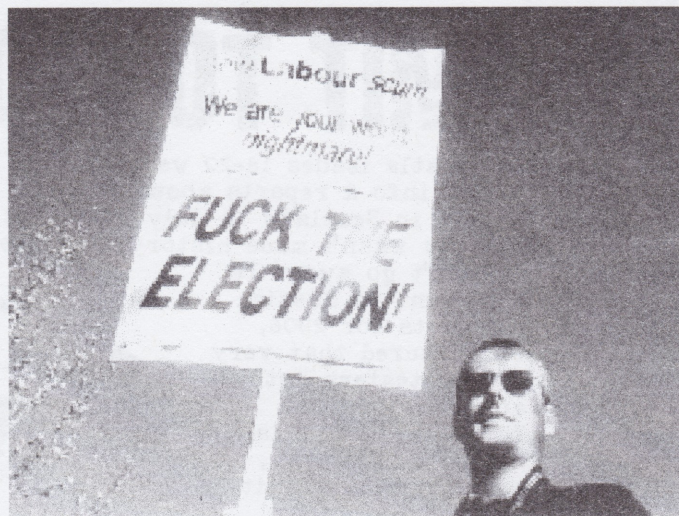
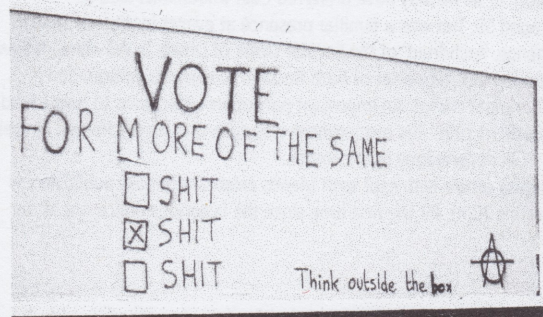


Having suffered Thatcher, every successive Tory cabinet was even more hideous, corrupt, blatantly perverse and self-serving than the last but still they remained in power.

What Tony Allen was inferring was that if people suffered enough and there was no end in sight then they would eventually hit back. They would riot in the streets. History is full of such examples so his analysis – if even light-hearted – held a lot of weight.

New Labour? Same Old Tories

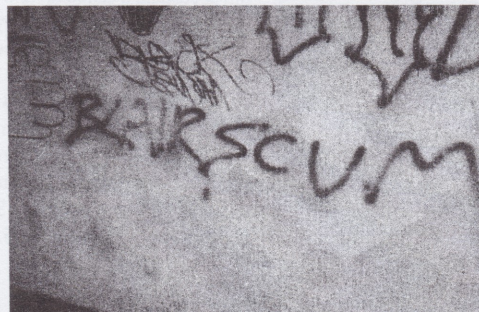
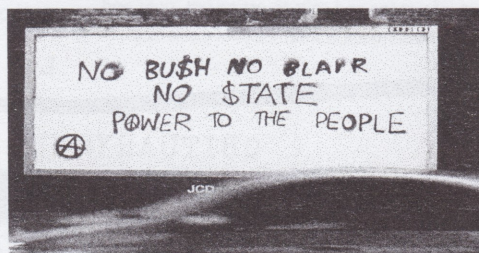
Suddenly, however, Tony Blair had been thrown up, spinning a whole new voter-friendly image for the opposition. So 'new' were they in fact,



In Trafalgar Sq, April 1997, this man was spot on. What nobody could foresee was – New Labour would be worse than OUR worst nightmare!
Credit: Class War, issue 73.

that they changed the name of their Party to 'New' Labour just to ram that point home. What they insisted upon was that they could better manage the UK than the Tories; promising better opportunity, social justice and transparency. So ethically bankrupt were the Tories by this stage that it wouldn't have been too difficult.

There were a lot of people, however, who were refusing to be drawn in by the promises of Blair. For them, a New Labour government offered nothing but business as usual though with an added grin – and the obvious delight in seeing the end of Tory rule. So instead of voting for Blair or any of the other political Parties, they chose not to vote at all – for after all: **whoever you vote for, government wins...**



New Labour's 1997 Manifesto – 10 headline policy pledges for the first five years of government:

1. Education will be our number one priority, and we will increase the share of national income spent on education as we decrease it on the bills of economic and social failure.
2. There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax.
3. We will provide stable economic growth with low inflation, and promote dynamic and competitive business and industry at home and abroad.
4. We will get 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work.
5. We will rebuild the NHS, reducing spending on administration and increasing spending on patient care.
6. We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and halve the time it takes persistent juvenile offenders to come to court.
7. We will help build strong families and strong communities, and lay the foundations of a modern welfare state in pensions and community care.
8. We will safeguard our environment, and develop an integrated transport policy to fight congestion and pollution.
9. We will clean up politics, decentralise political power throughout the United Kingdom and put the funding of political parties on a proper and accountable basis.
10. We will give Britain the leadership in Europe which Britain and Europe need.

Puke up on their manifestos at:
<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/>

Those who did choose to place their trust in Blair were rewarded with a basic continuation of Conservative political policy, the ratcheting up of State repression, the eroding of civil liberties and a perpetual war in the Middle East. **Voting – ticking a box and then going home – didn't really change nor achieve anything save for giving a mandate to probably the most slippery, manipulative government in British history.**



Dissenters Ignored

Those who had chosen not to vote were reliably informed by political pundits that by not partaking in the democratic process they subsequently had no right to complain. Whilst many who had voted and then later confronted the government, with one of the largest demonstrations ever – against the invasion of Iraq – were completely ignored.

The voicing of dissent outside of the ballot box was thus rendered ineffectual. Whilst silence is and was interpreted as consent. Ten years later then, and we're back to square one.

"I just thought they'd be better than..." Voices... Words from the past "Rioting in the streets... revolution... anarchy... and now that's not gonna happen because..."



Swings and roundabouts. A vicious circle.

The whole stinking bag of so-called democracy neatly sewn-up, now with added potential charges of 'terrorist activities' to contend with.

All of us caught in a web of power with all of us holding each other in place.

I can't move unless you move and you can't move unless I move.

The only real question now being: **For how much longer do we wait before together we try to break free of all this?**

1997 Election Result
Electorate 43,784,559
Turnout 71.3%
Swing to NewLabour 10.03%

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Lab	13,517,911	43.20 (+8.81)	418
C	9,600,940	30.69 (-11.24)	165
L Dem	5,243,440	16.76 (-1.09)	46
Others	2,922,407	9.3 (+3.5)	29

A message from our sponsor

The Rt. DisHon. Doley Blair!

A decade, yeah right, 10 years of Hard New Labour, not in French Guyana, Britain. 'We'll get Britain back on its feet', 'We'll get Britain working' – yeah right, in shit jobs with no union. 'A classless Britain', very classy! At least you could hate Thatcher, it was easy to stick a punch on her. Teflon Tony's as slippery as soap, not red, not blue, just spin doctor-spun silver and gold.

Remember this Mr Blair: I was signing on before you got in, I'll be signing on when you're gone. Too fucking right! My career in unemployment has been more successful than your career in politics – stick that in your autobiography, then stick it where the sun don't shine, sunshine!

The secret to my continued success? (I'll go slow so you can take notes Mr Blair). When I sign on I smile like you Tony, I play your own game better than you, and now I've got Group 4 security-guarding MY social security. I'm showing a convincing job search, that's the Weapon of My Deception, ten times better than your search for WMD's because I take PRIDE in my work. Damn right!

When asked to justify myself, I take a breath. And then I explain how I go about my search I don't skimp on the smallest detail filling their heads with tales of family life poverty the weather living in the ghetto and my health too much detail for them to compute yeah but no but so as you see I don't really think I'm cut out for being a chugger rejection on the high street for seven sheets an hour well that's not going to help my feet do you see?

I REJECT the high street and I don't miss it at all, keeping costs low, I'm living the life we should all be living. That's my legacy. So you keep on paddling away up there Mr Blair, all the way up shit creek, and I'll just steer from back here. The economy's doing fine brother, no slackers on this ship! Yeah Right! Ten More Years! Ten More Years!



'Education will be our number one priority,' but not because we want you to think....

by Dr. Y

New Labour may have claimed it would make education its number one priority, but it was perhaps unclear what they meant. From a statistical point of view there has been a rise in student numbers in the past ten years, with Bristol's universities constantly expanding, and participation has been widened. But there has been a consequential erosion of the quality of those graduates in terms of employability, political awareness, and a reorientation of students' motivation for entering higher education.

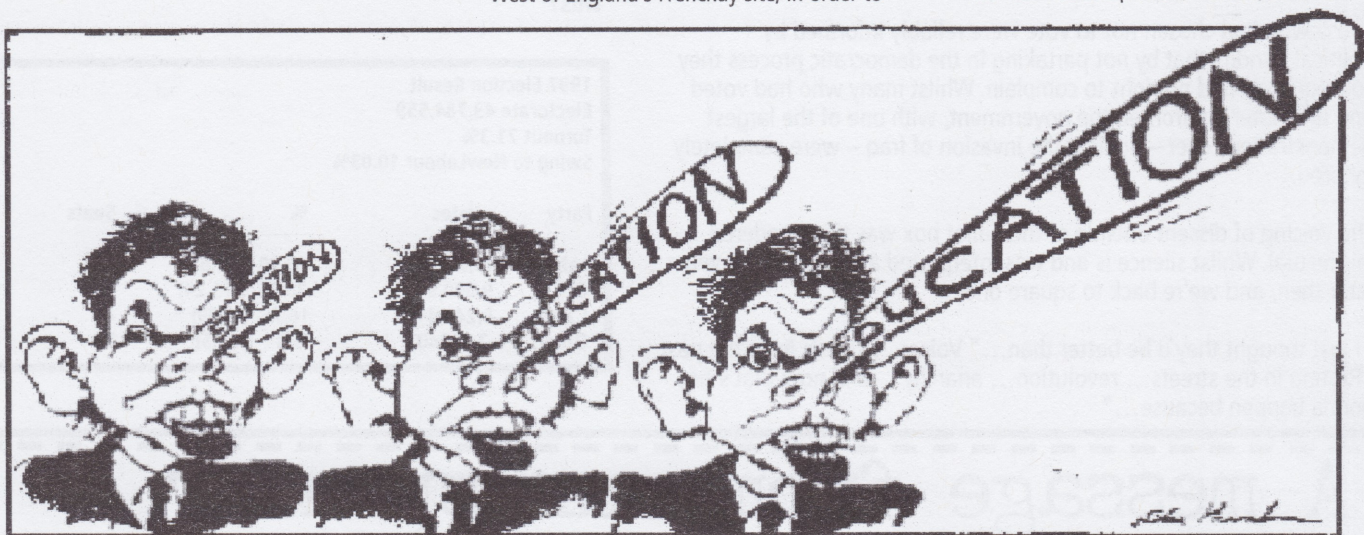
— now more alcohol-fuelled socializing than broadening horizons — thrown into the bargain.

It is not only the students who see themselves as consumers, but also the universities, with vice chancellors in Bristol and around the country labelling students as 'customers,' or 'stakeholders' (what they might hold a stake in is unclear) and seeing a need to attract their share of the market. Branding has become more important and large amounts of money are spent on marketing, developing non-education facilities and cosmetic aspects of universities, such as the University of the West of England's Frenchay site, in order to

them would be forthcoming once they had a degree.

Depoliticization — where have all the barricades gone?

While graduates have seen that employability is not necessarily enhanced by having attended university, they take little real action. Students, once notorious for their political activism, have become depoliticized by Blairite Britain and instead are enthusiastically embracing their role as consumers in the era of big business. The half-hearted protests at fees, as well



New Labour, new policy?

Under Blair we have heard much rhetoric about education as a means for individuals to empower themselves and find better employment. A target of 50% of school leavers going to university has been set, much as the Thatcherite government set it before New Labour. The motive of Thatcher's government was to break what was seen as a stronghold of liberal minded, left-wing academics and students who might provide resistance to the state, and turn universities into production lines of voters grateful for the opportunities their government gave them. New Labour's policies, although dressed up in different terms, are much the same — it is not about widening participation, it is about de-politicization, homogeneity and money.

Consumerism? Higher education needs a higher purpose

A degree has become a commodity, something that students aspire to possessing as consumers because of the perceived benefits it brings in employability. Acquiring an education is furthest from the minds of most UK students, who view their time at university as a means to an end, with an opportunity for the 'university experience'

recruit as many individuals as possible to an institution at the expense of developing academic resources. Universities have become large corporations; some of them even aspire to multi-nationalism, with campuses overseas.

Fees: Students are investing the cash — what about their minds?

One of the key reasons for repackaging university degrees is cost. While universities have suffered from funding issues for many years, New Labour proposed that some of the burden be shifted onto students, rather than all of the funding coming from the state. Shortly after A-level results were published in August 1997, the government announced that it was introducing fees of £1,000 per annum for undergraduate degrees. September 2007 saw student contributions jump to £3,000 a year and a new system put in place for repayment after graduation. Students, understandably, now feel that as they invested more (money) in their time at university than the generation before, they want something more in return. What they do not, on the whole, want is a better education. They want the better (i.e. higher paid) jobs that New Labour promised

as on a few other issues, have never had a real impact on New Labour policies towards students and they have joined the ranks of the disenchanted, some might say apathetic, majority. This is not to say that activism and political awareness have completely disappeared, but they no longer occupy the prominent position they once did, and are frequently limited to self-interest rather than wider issues. This would seem to be New Labour's real intentions with regards to universities — intentions adopted directly from the Thatcher playbook.

Universities have become production lines, turning out depoliticized graduate consumers with degrees worth less than they were ten years ago. They must be reclaimed. Students must see degrees and their time at university as useful in improving themselves, not in economic terms, but in broadening their minds, questioning authority and the status quo, and reaping the benefits that go along with that. The backlash is beginning, but it must be expanded and sustained: **EDUCATION FOR KNOWLEDGE, NOT FOR MONEY!!**

March 3 saw a national 'day of action' to defend the NHS as we know it, before the politicians of all parties have their way and continue its privatisation until they have achieved a model similar to that of the USA. Which means, er, no public health service.

++N.H.S S.O.S++



The present campaign is organised by the health service unions, staff associations, and the TUC, under the slogan 'NHS Together'. Calling for public support, at least 12 events were organised across the south west, mainly marches, rallies or vigils, but with little publicity. No industrial action (strikes, occupations etc) was called for by the leadership, and none appears to have happened. The union leaders appear not to have noticed these last 10 years that New Labour just ignore mainstream lobbying from the unions.

The Bristol march was organised locally by Unison. Whilst a number of trade union banners were present, there were not many health workers, as the march numbered around 200 people. As for the public, they gave support to the march as it passed, before quickly returning to their Saturday shopping, which whilst therapeutic won't do much good in the long run. Maybe next time?

More info: <http://www.nhstogether.org.uk>



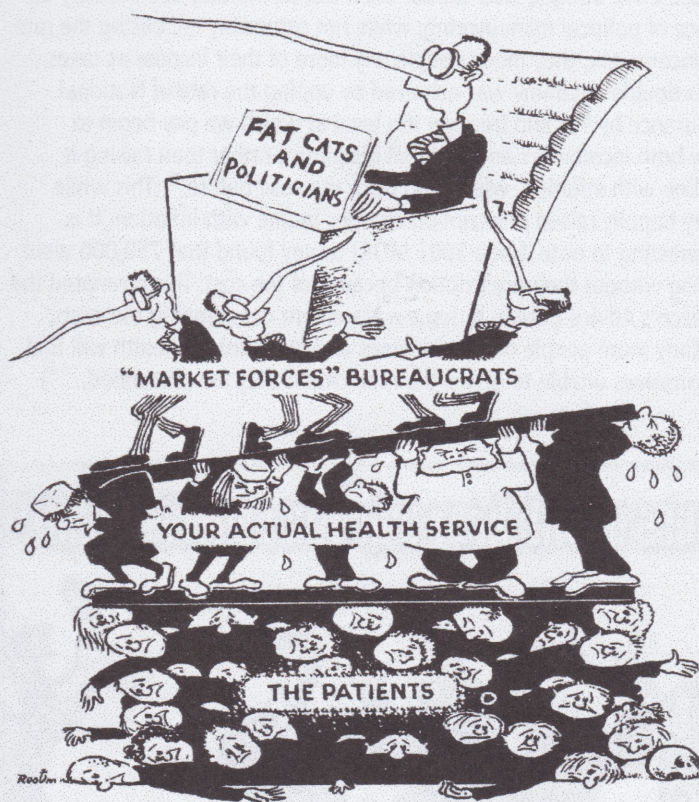
Politicians and Bosses, Healthy, Wealthy, and Wwww....what's the third one... Hmmm? WanKers!

by Mr S. A. Spread

Just recently, the Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt reportedly attended a £130,000 two-day party, organised and paid for by the Department of Health to entertain top health bosses. **Fat cats tucking into lavish meals whilst here on a local level, at the Royal United Hospital Bath, hot meals have been cut from two, to one a day, replaced by nutritionally poor sandwiches made up with economy bread.** Even Nestlé have seen this as a prime opportunity to jump in and supply build-up drinks to make up the shortfall in patients' nutritional needs.

It's horrible to see that people aren't making connections. Sure more money is getting ploughed into the N.H.S, and yet why are they still making cuts? How can both be happening? Again it's about making connections. Private companies are rubbing shoulders with N.H.S bosses and the Government, little favours here and there. From the Thatcher years through til now, N.H.S services have been split into little pieces of fat cat pie – there's profit to be made.

Like the Tories, the present govt. want to sell off the N.H.S.



However, just like the railways, it's a large and unattractive undertaking for one single private venture, so many private companies are up for grabbing a sizable chunk of manageable profit.

Most cleaning and catering services are given to the private sector, at a greater cost with a poorer service. Health workers are supplied via private agencies, workers whose rights have been eroded whilst bosses sit on their arses creaming a cut from their hourly rate.

The reality is, like the Tories before them, Labour want to get rid of any kind of public service. Government and bosses stand to make a fortune from privatisation. Laying off N.H.S staff both locally and nationally has forced workers to join private agencies with zero hour contracts with little or no guarantees or protection.

Health care for all is a right and not a privilege. It doesn't take a genius to work out that the £34 million a day spent on Iraq to secure oil for the super rich or the £1 billion a year spent on Afghanistan could go a long way to pay off hospital deficits which are a fraction of this.

So what can be done about it? Well authorities, elected or imposed aren't working for us, we realise that much. Education is a step forward to at least giving people some insight into how those in authority operate. Sometimes knowledge leads to the formation of an alternative framework or an inspiration to act on building associations within the workplace so we can start to fight back.

The evidence is before us, N.H.S staff have discovered that their so called representatives the Unions have been a waste of time, they have actively worked against staff by taking a quiet back seat. Even to the extent that locally they have not announced the recent visits of Patricia Hewitt to some local hospitals and not supported demonstrations.

So nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, cleaners – if you can't form a group, through fear of your boss giving you the sack, keep your mouth shut and work autonomously. Imagination can go a long way. Get active!

DEATH AND TAXES

by Anarchist 606

10 YEARS OF NEW LABOUR

page 12

BRISTLE 24

In the past Labour was lambasted by the Tories as the 'tax & spend' party, but this time around they wanted to appeal to 'middle England', and big business. But Anarchist 606 argues they were just being sneaky to the majority of us.

Death and taxes, so the old phrase goes, are the two certainties of life that we can rely on. They are also two things that Neo-Labour's policies have helped to blossom during their reign. Their policy of backing Bu\$h and the neocons has helped to ensure death in abundance, and their sneaky spinning ways have ensured a steady rise in taxes we pay as money gets transferred from our pockets to that of government (and then often on again to big business). In their 1997 manifesto they promised "There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax." Income tax was then (and is now) a big media issue – it is the largest source of government income and the political preoccupation of most right-wing newspapers. Neo-Labour, being the smart and savvy political operator it was (in the pre-Iraq days) knew that it had to be cautious about how it presented taxation; in the last few elections prior to their ascendancy, they had watched the right-wing media tear into old Labour over taxes. Neo-Labour, buoyed by a preoccupation with gaining power at any cost, studied the failures of the old and made plans carefully.

Sucking Up To Murdoch

They knew that to get power they had to reassure the media over taxes. The manifesto statement was there to reassure potential voters that the bad old days of Labour being considered the party of 'tax-and-spend' were over. (In hindsight the pledge is almost a prophetic vision of how Neo-Labour would look out for the rich and powerful and move towards the right, but we'll return to that theme later.) For now, in 1997 Neo-Labour wanted the support of Rupert Murdoch and his media empire and economic pledges such as this were key to that strategy. Lance Price, Downing Street's former director of communications, noted, "Whenever any really big decisions had to be taken, I had the impression that Murdoch was always looking over Blair's shoulder."¹ To give you an example of how important these policies are to Murdoch, he recently hinted recently that he might ditch Neo-Labour for the Tories after Cameron suggested a good old-fashioned right-wing policy of tax cuts.²



Big Banners at summits haven't stopped the Big Tax Swindle. What will?

A Neo-Labour Tax & Spin

So have they stuck to their 1997 promise? Like everything Neo-Labour does the answer is both yes and no. The answer lies in the spin and swill of their politics. They say one thing and do another, they hint at one policy while legislating for the opposite. Their tax policy is a classic Neo-Labour fix; they have stuck to the letter of their pledge and not raised the basic or top rates of tax while violating the spirit of the pledge by making us give them more of our money via taxes. How have they done this? While leaving income tax alone, Neo-Labour set about taking money from us in a number of ways; upping the duty of alcohol and tobacco, petrol, landfill, abolishing MIRAS, upping Stamp Duty and generally tweaking laws and policies in the government's favour. While some taxation such as petrol and landfill are needed to discourage environmentally

destructive ways, the government did not follow up with the positive; for example a better public transport system or directives to industry to reduce packaging, nope! Neo-Labour is just leaving us with more to pay and shirking its responsibility of creating alternatives. In an analysis of the 2000 budget, BBC News Online's political correspondent Nick Assinder noted that even Neo-Labour ministers had to admit that, "the overall tax burden...has increased under Labour."³

In the 2002 budget, Neo-Labour did a classic monkey-see-monkey-do piece of political maneuvering; while not ostensibly increasing the rate of income tax, they made people pay more of their income as taxes. This double whammy was achieved by upping the rate of National Insurance by 1% and freezing the level at which we pay begin to pay both income tax and national insurance, rather than raising it in-line with inflation, which had been the case before.⁴ (This while they happily raised prescription charges in-line with inflation. It is interesting to note that a 2001 MORI survey found that 750,000 were going without their prescription because of the cost. This prompted the Citizen's Advice Bureau to issue a statement condemning the costs; "Many more people on low incomes and in chronic ill-health will find themselves unable to afford the medication they are prescribed..."⁵)



UK Taxation Receipts 2004-5

	£BILLIONS	%
INCOME TAX	122.9	28.80%
NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS	78.1	18.30%
VALUE ADDED TAX	73.03	17.11%
CORPORATION TAX	34.1	7.99%
FUEL DUTIES	23.31	5.46%
COUNCIL TAX	20.1	4.71%
BUSINESS RATES	18.74	4.39%
OTHER TAXES AND ROYALTIES	11.7	2.74%
STAMP DUTY	8.97	2.10%
TOBACCO DUTY	8.1	1.90%
VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY	4.7	1.10%
BEER AND ZIDURR DUTIES	3.26	0.76%
INHERITANCE TAX	2.94	0.69%
SPIRITS DUTY	2.39	0.56%
INSURANCE PREMIUM TAX	2.36	0.55%
CAPITAL GAIN TAX	2.28	0.53%
WINE DUTY	2.23	0.52%
CUSTOMS DUTIES AND LEVIES	2.2	0.51%
BETTING & GAMING DUTIES	1.42	0.33%
PETROLEUM REVENUE TAX	1.28	0.30%
AIR PASSENGER DUTY	0.86	0.20%
CLIMATE CHANGE LEVY	0.76	0.18%
LANDFILL TAX	0.67	0.16%
AGGREGATES LEVY	0.33	0.08%

Source: Govt Treasury Figures for 2004/5

Council Tax Con

It is hard to talk about tax without mentioning Council Tax. As we all know, this is the method by which the money to pay for local services is raised. It is the successor tax to the hated Poll Tax, which was a successor tax to the despised Rates tax. Successive governments have increased the burden of local services by insisting Councils pay for everything from special needs education to an increased percentage of recycling while cutting the level financial support it offers. A classic example would be fridges. Fridges, especially older ones, come filled with CFC gases (the ones that destroy the ozone layer). A European Directive said that these dangerous gases cannot just be landfilled and needed to be disposed of safely. The government said that local Councils should deal with it and gave them £6million to do so, yet the Local government Association estimated that just collection and disposal would cost over £50million¹⁰. Then think that disposal costs around £12 per fridge and there are around 6,500 fridges disposed of in the UK per day. Then you see why local government cries foul over costs, yet gets the blame for Council Tax rises¹¹. There was no suggestion from the government that big business should help out in shouldering this burden.

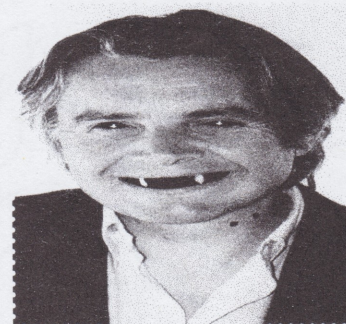
NewLabour = NewCorruption

Tax & Spend - For Big Business

Back to the 1997 manifesto pledge; "There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax." Compare this with old Labour's 1983 manifesto on taxes, "We shall reform taxation so that the rich pay their full share and the tax burden on the lower paid is reduced."⁶ It is clear how the party has abandoned its socialist roots in the pursuit of power. Neo-Labour has managed to ditch that old media spun image with one of fiscal prudence, but the reality is they are still a party of tax-and-spend. It's just now it's done in a big-business friendly way. Big business has a number of powerful lobby groups to ensure that the government does as it's told. For example a Guardian investigation in 2002 accused the government of giving concessions, not imposing the correct penalties and not investigating loss of potential taxes of the largest multinational in the UK. This favoritism was estimated to have cost £20 billion in tax revenue – and guess who makes up the shortfall when it comes to buying new bombs for Iraq?⁷ Oh yes. Us.

When it comes to spend, Neo-Labour has excelled at passing our money into the hands of the private sector. The main tool for achieving this is by privatisation (PFI, PPP and all the other similar methods it has evolved). For example take QinetiQ, the former defense research institute. Built up over many, many years with taxpayers' money. In 2001 it is privatised and branded as 'QinetiQ' and the US private equity firm the Carlyle Group acquires a 33.8% share in the company for £42million. Five years later the company is floated on the stock market and the Carlyle Group's share is now worth £400million⁸. A nice little earner. Another example would be the 400 planned academies, which will see £14 billion of wealth transferred to the private sector⁹.

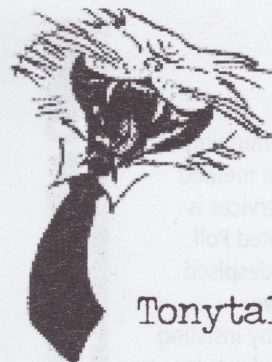
The final story on taxes I wanted to mention is that of Paul Rudd Drayson. He co-founded PowderJect Pharmaceuticals and his company was given £32million of our money in the form of government smallpox vaccine contract without any competition for the work. Shortly after he donated £50,000 to the Neo-Labour Party. Then he was made a Baron. Then he gave the Neo-Labour Party another donation £500,000¹². He is currently Minister for Defence Procurement and decides what weapons to spend our money on. And guess what...in 2005 he was accused of using offshore schemes to avoiding paying around £3million in taxes, wealth financed by taxes we pay. It's the Neo-Labour way. Remember this story next time you look at your pay slip and see how much the state has taken¹³.



PAUL DRAYSON - TAX VAMPIRE!

Footnotes:

1. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/politics/story/0,,1827023,00.html>
2. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20060123/ain16017392
3. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk/2000/budget2000/685786.stm
4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/1935546.stm>
5. http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/winn6/index/pressoffice/press_index/press-040303.htm
6. <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1983/1983-labour-manifesto.shtml>
7. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4466673,00.html>
8. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QinetiQ>
9. Figures quoted from Guardian 18/1/07.
10. <http://www.lga.gov.uk/conservativegroup/PressRelease.asp?Isection=543&id=5X1420-A78066C9&ccat=544>
11. http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,632328,00.html
12. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Drayson_Baron_Drayson
13. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-1613094,00.html>



Blair's New Labour and the Environment: The Ugly Rumours were all True

by e2w

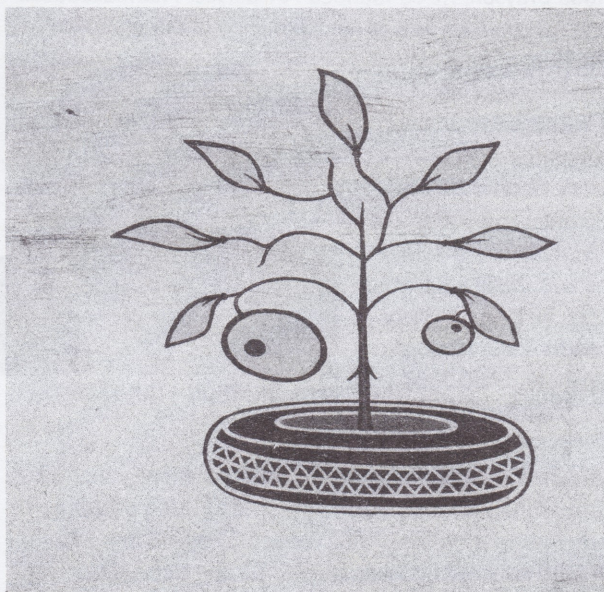
Tonytalitarianism

To understand old Tony Blair's views on the environment it is important to put them in the context of the optimistic era of 'the white hot heat of technology' during the 1960s and 1970s when his political ideas were being formed. The post-war generation of baby boomers enthused about the democratisation of mobility through the mass production of the car and the development of the motorway system. Pundits believed that atomic power would make electricity too cheap to meter.

Unsurprisingly then New Labourites tend to bang on about modernisation rather a lot. There is constant renewal but little real social progress. Central Bristol is the perfect example of the effect of this approach on local communities. It is constantly being knocked down and redeveloped, its air poisoned by traffic pollution. Some areas are so cut up by the M32 that it is impossible for walkers and cyclists to safely move between them at night.

Blair thinks of anyone that has a different point of view as anti-science, as an irrational idealist. Anyone that doesn't share his view that globalised capitalism within a state infrastructure is the only possible ideology that is credible is dismissed. His greatest strengths, his ability to communicate and complete self-belief, make him dangerous.

The guitar-playing member of the Ugly Rumours and one-time CND member who called himself a Socialist wanted to change the system from within the Establishment. To get power he then dropped CND, supported a patriotic agenda, and famously attacked Labour's Clause 4 for public ownership. He ended up continuing the Thatcher legacy and helping to destroy the planet. A warning for our times.



Transport

New Labour were never serious about the environment. It was only eighth in priority in the 1997 party manifesto. This pledged: 'We will safeguard our environment, and develop an integrated transport policy to fight congestion and pollution'.

Ten years later all of these objectives have totally failed, locally and nationally. Bristol City Council concedes: 'Over 200,000 people in Bristol live, work or go to school in areas where air pollution targets are not being met'. (<http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/ccm/content/Transport-Streets/>

transport-policy/road-traffic-and-the-environment.en). This is half of the population of the city!

Privatised corporation First have exploited their monopoly across the West Country to increase bus fares above inflation throughout the past decade. Train tickets have similarly soared in price. No serious attempts have been made at integration.

Not surprisingly, there has been a massive increase in the total number of kilometres travelled by road since 1997. Disastrously, some 80% of the journeys that take place in the UK are now by car. Traffic on motorways in England is expected to rise by at least 40% by 2015, according to the Department of Transport (*Guardian*, 2 Dec 2006).

Despite this, Bristol City Council plans to substantially underspend on public transport, spending only £26 per head compared to the average (for comparable cities) of £47 per head (see BCC's draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2007-2010, p. 4 (5.3)). At the grassroots level some people have been attempting to change the culture such as Bristol and Bath cycling campaigns and Critical Mass. There has been spirited and tireless campaigning by Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR), especially their work to promote a half-hour service on the Severn Beach line, with the support of ASLEF, the train drivers' union.



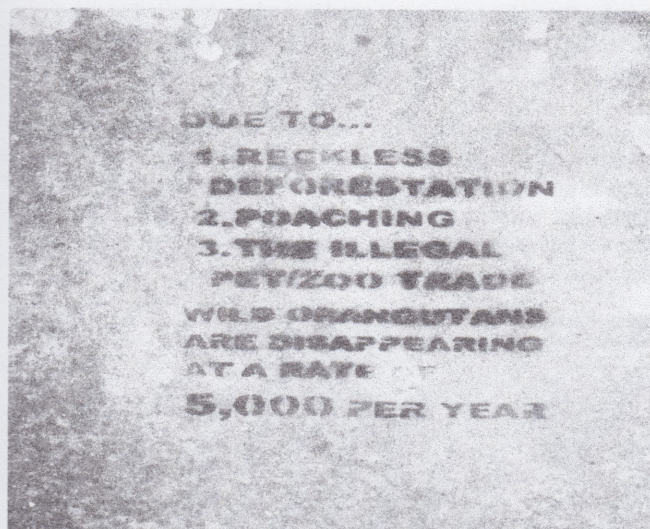
Climate Change

Blair's common sense and realistic approach is illustrated by his recent statements on air travel.

'You know, I'm still waiting for the first politician who's actually running for office who's going to come out and say it [that people should not fly] - and they're not... It's like telling people you shouldn't drive anywhere.'

'I think that what we need to do is to look at how you make air travel more energy efficient, how you develop the new fuels that will allow us to burn less energy and emit less' (See BBC website: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6242927.stm).

The reality is that since mass civilian air transport began after WW2, improvements in efficiency have been modest and the increase in air travel and hence pollution and climate change have been exponential. George Monbiot's recent book *Heat* challenges and demolishes the idea of a quick technological fix to enable sustainable green flying. 'The Royal Commission reports that "the basic gas turbine design emerged in 1947. It has been the dominant form of aircraft engine for some 50 years and there is no serious suggestion that this will change in the foreseeable future"' (http://environment.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,,1877388,00.html#article_continue). It is hard to see how it could be made much more efficient than it is already.' If George Monbiot's research and conclusions are correct then Blair's optimism is totally misplaced – his legacy will be a sasquatch-sized carbon footprint.



Environmentalists such as the campaigners against the expansion of Bristol Airport often object that increasing carbon dioxide emissions produced by aircraft could easily cancel out reductions in all other areas of economic activity. Blair and the aviation industry look to the market to address global warming, especially emissions trading. However, their equally energetic lobbying to expand airports at Bristol, Stanstead and elsewhere suggests that they do not have much confidence in their own solution to catastrophic increases! Stop Bristol Airport Expansion neatly capture the logical predicament:

'BIA [Bristol International Airport] seems to counter this unpleasant situation by saying that market mechanisms such as carbon trading will limit this growth. We hope that they are right and it is, of course, yet another strong reason not to expand the airport'.

Militarism and Trident Replacement

It is difficult to imagine anything more environmentally destructive than modern warfare. An early casualty of New Labour's bloody wars was its 'ethical foreign policy'. We haven't heard that phrase for a long time. Oh and of course the transparency of the truth. Early ideals about ethical foreign policy were overwhelmed by massive armaments interests. The result was such dubious shenanigans as the recent end to investigations into alleged corruption in arms deals with Saudi Arabia, an authoritarian state with a poor human rights reputation and home to several Jihadist political factions. Greetings from the crater-pocked age of depleted uranium and the cluster bomb, from the foggy nightmare of extraordinary rendition!

Following 'the million march' on 14th February 2003, Tony Blair said: 'If there are 500,000 on that march, that is still less than the number of people whose deaths Saddam has been responsible for' (The Times, 17 February 2003); an estimated 600,000 have died since in the conflict that followed (see *Lancet* study <http://www.thelancet.com/webfiles/images/journals/lancet/s0140673606694919.pdf>). However, the mass international resistance against the war and the disastrous consequences at least



helped to prevent the immediate expansion of the conflict by invading Syria and Iran – a real possibility for Blair's Neo-Liberal friends in 2003 (*Financial Times*, 14 April 2003).

It seems parliament will spend little time debating the replacement for Trident with a new weapon of mass destruction. Nuclear weaponry is unthinkable for anarchists who have been at the forefront of nuclear disarmament struggles from the Committee of 100 civil disobedience campaign of the 1960s, to the support of positive punks such as Crass, the Poison Girls and the Flux of Pink Indians during the 1980s peace movement to the appearance of groups like the Wombles during the resistance against the attack on Iraq. Nuclear weaponry is the ultimate expression of the authoritarian military-industrial complex that anarchists oppose. We shall never accept the indiscriminate targeting of millions of world citizens just because they inhabit a particular geographical location, or the threat permanent environmental destruction. We refuse to fall into the unilateralist/multilateralist binary thinking, believing that such destructive tendencies can only be defeated by breaking down the sectarian nationalism and tribalism that divides us.

Things can only get better?

Today it is obvious that New Labour's innovation is old hat. Social Ecologists such as the late Murry Bookchin knew that technological fixes in themselves will not solve all society's ills because social ills have social causes. Nothing less than a social revolution in the distribution of wealth and power, education, decision-making processes and in our own lifestyles will bring this about. Science itself is not a neutral 'good thing'. It needs to be liberated from the stranglehold of corporate control of research and development. Over the past ten years Bristol has become an archive of resistance, giving a space to grass roots environmental campaigns that are alive, flourishing and kicking across the West Country. Some are fighting globalisation at the local level such as climate change campaigners and those who take direct action against genetically-modified organisms. Others, just as importantly, resist the impact of globalisation on the local, protecting their nearby playing field or favourite bit of countryside. It is not just NIMBYism to oppose the building of over 40,000 projected houses in the countryside around Bristol (see www.southglosfoe.org.uk). The destruction of green spaces does not solve the lack of affordable housing when the buying power of second-home owners and buy-to-let speculators push prices up. Hunt saboteurs are still active locally despite the ban. They know that blood rituals of the mastery of nature are the last thing we need in this new century. Other West Country folk build alternatives through workers' co-operatives or permaculture. Respect to them all.



You've Never Had It So Good!

"Bristol is transforming itself into a key driver of the UK's economy and is developing a national and European profile it has not seen for some time. The city has the most competitive economy in England outside London with double the national average of new VAT registered businesses created over the past decade." (www.investwest.org)

"Here in Bristol some of the most innovative and exciting scientific, medical, digital and technological breakthroughs are being made..... I believe there are many aspects of Bristol's approach to partnership <with business> that can already be held up as a model for other cities across Europe." (Barbara Janke 23/11/06)

Ahhhh, the good times! We've never had it so good, and that's OFFICIAL folks! Bristol is a New Labour success story, and the city has been rewarded for sticking by Labour through the bad times with Ten Golden Years of prosperity. **Come, take my hand and walk with me through this City of Dreams!**

Don't worry, you haven't picked up a copy of Venue by mistake. You don't need me to tell you that the start of this article is a crock of shit because you live in Bristol, or in another area of the South West that have suffered the same. You've got eyes that see the cracks in the plaster; you've got a heart that feels the pain around you.

However, lets leave out emotion for a second and look at the evidence of how this 'competitive economy', that Janke and her 'partners' are so proud of, has been created over the last 10 years.

Out with the Old and Out with the New

The aim of New Labour (both central govt. and Bristol Council, which was Labour controlled from 1997 to 2003) was to switch from the dirty old manufacturing economy to a new shiny 'Knowledge Based Economy'. This new economy doesn't make things; it sells things like scientific expertise, financial services, customer service etc. Bristol has excelled in this area, in fact it's done a bit too well. — **over 11,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last 10 years.** 'Making things' only accounts for 10% of jobs in Bristol (and most of these are in the unethical defence industry) compared with 33% in 1977. The service sector accounts for 88.8% of local jobs.

So, what's the problem? In a nutshell, manufacturing jobs usually need a level of skill and training that means staff turnover tends to be low as these skills are harder to replace. Also, they need investment in factories and equipment — in other words, they require a long-term commitment to the area. **Service industry jobs require little training or qualifications** (NVQs in things like Customer Service are seen as irrelevant even in the service

industry). They don't need factories or equipment, all they need is empty office space, and we all know there's no shortage of that in Bristol!

However, the reason for all the empty office space is that many 'partners' in Bristol's 'success story' have already packed up and fucked off to China, India or wherever the subsidies are highest and the wages are the lowest. **Remember the call centre boom of the 90's that mopped up a whole generation of Bristol university and school-leavers?** The huge human factory farms of BT CiB, SSL, Brann and others? They've all gone, and in 5 or 10 years time, when the subsidies (paid for out of our council tax, remember!) run out, the current service sector businesses will do the same thing.

Pile us High, Sell us Cheap

So the Knowledge Based Economy is not good in the long term, but in the short term at least us folks are getting paid, right? **We may not have the skills, but at least we're paying the bills, right?**

WRONG. Not only does the quality of the jobs decline in the Knowledge Based Economy, everything else the workers want gets fucked as well. Rather than being able to plan ahead for families, rainy days, retirement, whatever, we're constantly kept in a state of fear, like lab rats being drip-fed Acid. Fear of the sack for not fitting in with the boss, so bad we end up laughing at all the jokes they make.



The
knowledge
based
economy —
Suit you, Sir?

Fear of having to reapply for our own jobs in some bullshit 'streamlining exercise', knowing they'll give it to the teenage kid coz he's on 3 grand less than us. Fear that the company will up-sticks and 'off-shore' if we don't agree to every increase in workload and benefit-cut they ask for.

But what about the collective power of the workers, the traditional antidote to this slow-acting poison? **The Unions are dead and buried, never to return** — not because the Thatcherite revolution beat them down, or because they became out of touch, or because they sold out their members for 'the good of the union' (although all these things are true). The Unions are dead and buried, never to return because in the Knowledge Based Economy there's no bargaining tools left for them to use. Lobby for better conditions? Get back to work, or you'll lose the lot. Go slow? They'll 'performance manage' you out. Strike? There's a thousand scabs who can do your job with a weeks training. The fear only works one way — **we're scared of the bosses but they're no longer scared of us.**

Ten Golden Years of New Labour in Bristol hasn't just fucked us in the head, it hasn't just fucked us in the heart, it's fucked us in the pocket as well. Compared to the rest of the country, the switch to the Knowledge Based Economy in Bristol has led to a big cut in wages. **In 1998 the average Bristolian was paid on average £7.70 a week MORE than the British average. By 2003 we were getting paid £3.20 LESS.** And THIS is the model that Janke and her 'multiple partners' want the rest of Europe to follow??!

Bingo Quango Bango!

Feeling ripped off? Getting angry? Why not write a letter to your councillor? If we pressure them enough we can force them to do something about it, right? **WRONG.**

Hand in hand with the growth of 'flexibility' in the Bristol economy, 10 years of New Labour has meant there's now a lot of 'flexibility' when it comes to democratic accountability as well.

The Government Office for the South West (GOSW) is the quango that represents government departments at local level and has the job of being the 'strategic catalyst' to Bristol Council. In other words, it tells it what to do, in areas such as the economy, law and order and 'community' (i.e. everything else). The GOSW is directed by political appointees chosen by central government, so we don't get any say in who's involved. **Its main goal is to 'remove barriers to growth' by which it means decent wages, benefits, job security and anything else business think is a bad thing.**

The GOSW doesn't run the Bristol economy however. No, a different quango does that: The South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), created in 1999. The GOSW runs the SWRDA, naturally, but they do it in 'partnership' with big business, and a minority vote of councillors to give it a thin varnish of democracy. The SWRDA issues 'Local Area Agreements' to the Council that it has to follow, on anything from transport to the number of cops staking out the chip shop (sorry, I mean 'hard at work preventing crime').

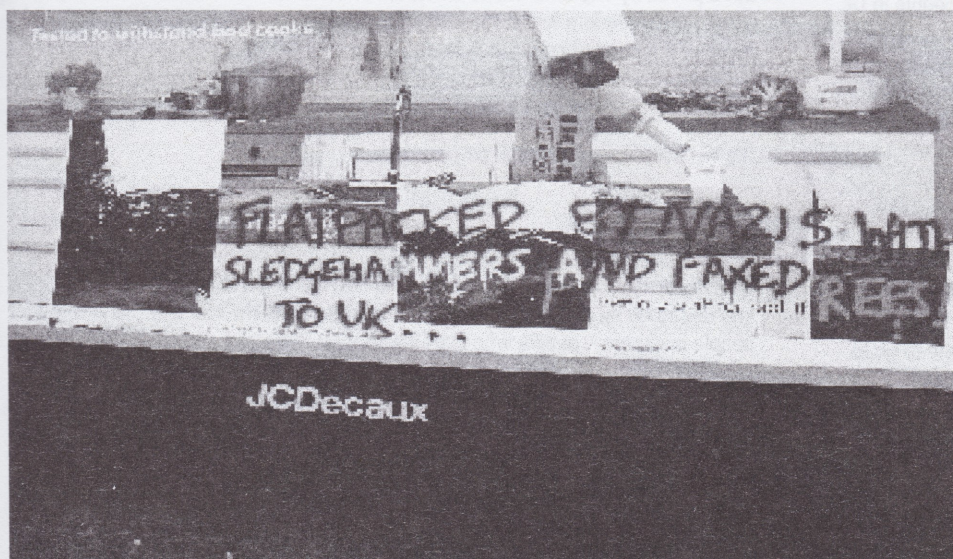
The SWRDA's stated aim in these Agreements is always to 'increase flexibility' and 'strategically lead' the council by the nose to do whatever big business wants it to do. Needless to say, the SWRDA and the GOSW are very vocal cheerleaders for the Knowledge Based Economy.

No wonder local councillors are always hijacking local campaigns, getting photographed planting trees, or bickering with each other over petty differences – they've got nothing else to do with their time! They've had all the power stripped from them and given to non-elected bodies that serve business and central government interests. **'The Partners' control everything, like feudal barons, always working in their own interests and constantly reducing the role of 'outside interests' – the interests of the people of Bristol.**

There's no Justice There's Just Us

Wake up from the New Labour dream and face the nightmare. Bristol is leading the way all right – to economic disaster and the loss of democracy. Bristol is the new model of how to screw the people and get away with it. Labour, New Labour, Tories, 'Who Dems', Respect – the players will change but the game always stays the same: keep the poor on the breadline and the corporate hand in the honeypot. As long as we keep just asking, they'll just keep ignoring us. Janke and her swinging partners need to be shown they can't ignore the wishes of the people of Bristol. **It's time to make the bosses fear us again.**

By Boyd



Patronage and the Quango State

Way back in the mid-1990's as the Tories started to drown amidst a sea of personal & financial sleaze, New Labour promised their administration would be scandal-free. We couldn't get a comment from Lord Levy on the matter, but investigated anyway.

The embarrassment of the Bernie Ecclestone affair forced Labour into legislation requiring parties to publicly declare donations of £5000 or more to political parties. But before the 2005 general election, Labour secretly exploited a loophole in its own law, receiving huge loans from a string of millionaire businessmen to fund its re-election campaign and make up the cash shortfall from its haemorrhaging membership. Two of Blair's most controversial peerage nominations were entrepreneurs who'd ploughed money into his pet project of City Academy schools the epitome of the public-private love-in that has come to define Blairism.



At the level of local democracy, Blairism has transformed the political landscape into a labyrinth-like array of public-private 'partnerships' and quangos, which run services from education to zoos. These "experts" with private-sector level salaries can focus on 'getting the job done' without the irritation of public scrutiny or accountability. There is no independent monitoring of who gets to sit on their boards, nor of the potential conflict of interests many recruits might face between their business and public service remits. Scary stuff, as more than a £1 billion of public money is controlled by unelected quangos in Bristol and Bath alone.

In cities like Bristol and Plymouth (where the new level of unelected government has met with admirable resistance), it's often in poorer areas with high levels of social exclusion where services are given over to public-private partnerships. The Quangmeisters wouldn't want to shit on their own doorsteps would they?!

The lack of public consultation over the development of Packer's Fields by the new Academy school in St. George (see p. 5) is one example where already deprived communities

are forced to make a Faustian bargain between public services and democratic accountability. This 'choice' is not faced by the BBC-set in Redland who get a spanking new, 100% publicly funded school for Oscar and Tilly in the shape of Redland Green School. That education for the poor should depend on the 'noblesse oblige' of rich businessmen takes us back to before Victorian days.

If Thatcherism squeezed the state, the logic of Blairism has very nearly disappeared it altogether.

By Mike Upton

Crime and Punishment

New Labour famously promised to be 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime'. Unfortunately they seem to have decided that it's **people** that are the primary cause of crime and have therefore taken it upon themselves to criminalise great swathes of the population. If you're an 'illegal' immigrant, you use drugs, you've got a mental health problem, or you're just not a pipe-and-slippers denizen of middle England then WATCH OUT! 'Cause this government's got it in for you...

So much crime

New Labour see criminal behaviour everywhere and they've legislated accordingly. They've created ASBOs ('a sign of an increasing intolerance of individuals who are different', Probation Officer's Union); they've introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act ('incompatible with human rights obligations', Human Rights News); they've introduced the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act ('The government clearly do not want me as a constant reminder of the immense suffering they are causing the people of Iraq', Brian Haw).

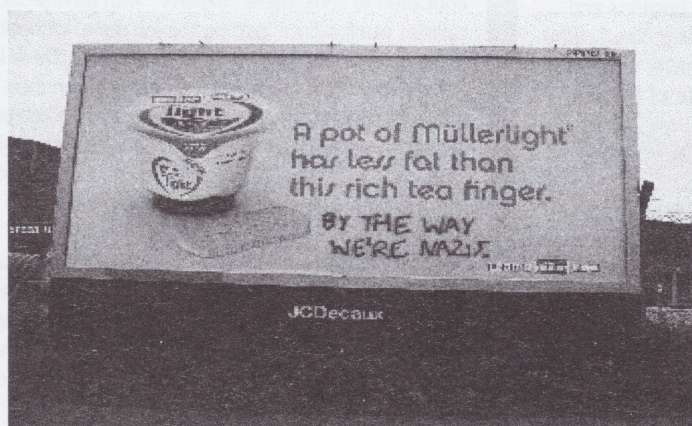
The tabloid-reading UK public tend to agree with New Labour's assessment – surveys suggest that two thirds of the country believe that crime is rising. The reality is that the crime rate in the UK has gone **down** over the last ten years. This trend is similar for the South West, which has the joint lowest recorded rate of crime in England and Wales.

Putting (lots of) people in Prison

Despite a falling crime rate, since the start of 1993 the prison population has risen 90% – from 41,600 to more than 79,600 in autumn 2006. The number of people found guilty by courts is stable, but the proportion jailed has risen. About one in six prisoners is being held on remand (so they haven't even been found GUILTY)!

Here's a statistic for you: In 1993 there were 29 shoplifters in jail at any one time. By 2003, that figure had risen to 1,500. This gives you an idea of the sentencing regime that this government has introduced.

What's more the experience of prisoners in the UK is very bad. Just outside Bristol, near Pucklechurch, lies Ashfield prison and young offender's institution (privately run by the Premier Custodial group). Ashfield has come in for particular criticism: In 2002 the prison governor was removed amid concerns over prison conditions; conditions which were questioned again by the Prison Reform Trust in November 2006.



In general prison clearly makes things worse: One in three prisoners will lose their house while in prison; two out of three will lose their job, and nearly half will lose contact with their family. Many prisoners find they develop drugs problems while inside.

Asylum seekers

You wouldn't think that seeking asylum would be an activity worth discussing in the context of crime. But that would be to ignore the fact that there are more than 2000 asylum seekers currently being held in UK prisons and detention centers.

Who are all these people?

Surprise, surprise, the majority of people in UK prisons are from impoverished backgrounds. There is a history of disadvantage and poor health. More than 70% of prisoners suffer from multiple mental disorders; and compared with the general population people in prison are 13 times as likely to have been in care as a child.

But prison is not a place for you to turn your life around: More than two thirds of offenders will re-offend within two years of release. Hardly surprising when you consider the fact that most prisoners are released with no home to go to and no job (visit any of Bristol's homeless hostels and you'll encounter a goodly number of recently released prisoners trying desperately to readjust to life 'outside'). Nearly half of all prisoners lose contact with their family while inside, and many develop drug problems.

Even New Labour wouldn't necessarily say these people are criminals – many are being held while the decision on their application for asylum is processed. But a prison by any other name would smell as rancid. Whole families are being denied their freedom whilst the UK's Daily Mail culture whips up a frenzy of panic at the flood of criminals entering the country. Well, for the record, it ain't a flood (in the South West there are about 1200 government supported asylum seekers – 0.025% of the population) and asylum seekers are more likely to be the victims of crime than the perpetrators.

It's not all statistics

New Labour are wrecking people's lives. All the numbers that have been quoted correspond to people. People who deserve better than to be labeled and discarded by a government without a conscience. The real criminals are the people in charge – people who start illegal wars, who turn a blind eye to dodgy arms deals, who give titles to their mates while the rest of the country suffers.

Damn their eyes.

By Nickleberry

New Bristle: A Mission Statement

Dear comrade stakeholders, the Bristle Collective has been horizon-scanning. Make no mistake about it, our august organ must be made fit for purpose in order to maintain competitive advantage and survive in the global marketplace. To meet this objective we have recently spent several millions of pounds of our projected sales income on consultancy fees. Now we have taken a strategic decision to top-slice our budget and pump prime Bristle for a robust re-branding. As a service provider for total-quality revolutionary propaganda we are actioning a raft of measures to ensure best value. This is in line with our vibrant vision to make New Bristle a world-class centre of excellence for contrarians and agitators.

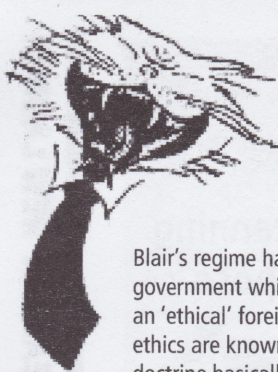
A DIY zine is all very well but why not contract out? Our new human resources team will be working around the clock with no toilet breaks to ensure the seamless knowledge transfer of agit-prop from an Export Processing Zone in South-East Asia. Meanwhile the solutions-focussed Bristle Collective will be retaining essential core functions – such as opening fan mail and folding unused covers into paper airplanes – in the comfort of our bunker.

While recycled paper would be lovely in an ideal world it's not very shiny. Challenging and innovative new issues will be published on wipe-clean pvc, glossy as a police officer's boots, to outshine shelf-competitors like Good Housekeeping, Nuts and Fishing Today. In future your dynamic new thought-criminal's digest will also be available by direct debit on a pay-by-line arrangement (10% discount for American Express). Be assured however, that New Bristle will continue to flag up and take on board issues around horrible, nasty, anti-social things that have gone so deplorably wrong in the West Country, for your entertainment and delight.

New Bristle will be showcased at a launch party with pink champagne, venison canapés and goats cheese with rocket at the Merchant Venturers Hall on 31st June 2007. All corporate partnerships will be welcomed.

New Bristle: in the business of attacking business as usual.

By the newly appointed Information Czar



New Labour: An Ethical Foreign Policy?

by Nickleberry

Blair's regime has consistently attempted to portray itself as a government which subscribes to a moral imperative; it claims to have an 'ethical' foreign policy. When it comes to military activity, these ethics are known as the Blair Doctrine of Humanitarian Intervention. This doctrine basically states that we are, at times, morally obliged to interfere militarily in situations of horrendous social injustice.

But how ethical is New Labour's stance? Look beneath the rhetoric and this moral standpoint explodes in your face, revealing a different set of ethics entirely.

Morality, economics, and confusion

Since 1999, the UK has gone to war with Afghanistan and Iraq. Both these wars have had confused motivations – the first was supposedly in response to the 9-11 attacks; the second had something to do with weapons of mass destruction – but both also purported to have an element of the Blair doctrine at their heart. Supposedly the UK was trying to rescue populations from the tyranny of the Taliban/Saddam Hussein – a moral cause.

The moral cause continues in the economic realm – characterized most clearly by the G8 summits. Tony Blair has been an enthusiastic participant of these summits and has used them to present himself, once again, as a campaigner for justice - claiming to use the tools of international capitalism to bring wealth to the poorest of the poor. Thus we hear talk of increased aid, debt cancellation, and a removal of trade restrictions.

The ethics of resistance

The fact of the matter is, though, that Labour's foreign policy is utterly unethical. And it is the resistance to this policy which has most clearly shown it up. Let us list some of the ways in which the heroes of the movement have put New Labour to shame...

1. They don't involve men with guns and bombs. If you're one of the Fairford Five seeking to disarm B52 bombers your tools are bolt cutters and commitment. If you're Jo Wilding reporting from Fallujah, your tools are vanishing handkerchiefs and circus tricks. There is something obscene in the notion that exploding pieces of metal can solve political problems and this obscenity is something that the movement continually seeks to expose.

'Ultimately the ethics of the powerful are always ethics for the powerful'

2. Their actions don't have strings attached. 'Ethical Foreign Policy' is nothing more than a New Labour spin on the old colonial game of rape and pillage. The G8's offers of debt relief etc are inextricably tied to countries adopting free market economic policies - policies which allow ever more local wealth to be stripped by multinational corporations. In contrast protestors from all over the South West participated in a wholehearted rejection of the G8: those eight men in suits are not the solution to poverty, they are the driving cause of it.

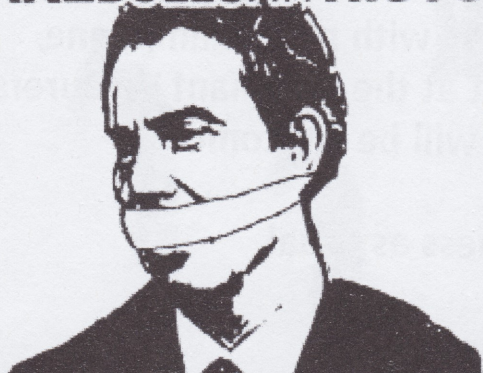
3. They don't assume they know best. Try asking the people of Iraq what they think of Blair's doctrine! The considerations of local people must always be primary in any act of international solidarity. Which is why Bristol people organise solidarity football matches with people in Mexico, why we send computers to the people of Palestine. With careful and considered communication we can find avenues of peace and justice; but we must be prepared to listen.

4. They are not wealth creators. At the top of the New Labour hymn sheet you'll find the 'Ode to Economic Growth'. Ultimately New Labour believes that if we create enough wealth all the problems of the world will be solved. This is a dogma that the movement consistently and resolutely rejects. We have plenty of wealth as it is - indeed, as any member of Bristol Rising Tide will tell you, we have a good deal too much wealth. The question now is how to distribute what we have in a responsible and just manner.

'There is something obscene in the notion that exploding pieces of metal can solve political problems'

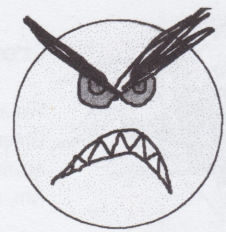
Ultimately the ethics of the powerful are always ethics for the powerful. The movement in the South West is part of a bigger movement seeking to undermine that power and, instead, bring justice. Ours is a humanizing paradigm, not a military one.

MAKEBULLSHITHISTORY



WE KNEW THOSE WHITE BANDS WOULD COME IN HANDY FOR SOMETHING

10 more years of extra-parliamentary opposition



- Bristle lets loose Mr Angry to look back to 1997, and critique the movement today.

Election night, 1 May 1997, remember it? 18 years of Tory rule, all my adult life, now the bastards were getting the boot. My enemies enemy, NuLabour, was not my friend. But it was great to see those Tories fall, with no better moment than Michael Portillo, the closet Tory darling, losing to the openly gay NuLabour candidate, Stephen Twigg. Oooh, the irony. 10 years on....Portillo sits, rehabilitated, on our TV screens every week, cuddling upto Diane Abbott, the onetime left NuLabour MP. Now she sends her kid to a private school. Got the choice hasn't she. How NuLabour is that?

'Never mind the ballots, reclaim the streets'

On 12 April 1997, thousands joined the Reclaim The Streets 'March for Social Justice' that ended with a street party, and mini-riot, in Trafalgar Square. It was organised with the Liverpool Dockers, who were engaged in a bitter old-style strike. Like all RTS events it operated on many levels - street party; riot; secret planning groups; affinity group actions. You could do a bit of each, or just one, as anyone who attended the many RTS events in Bristol may recall.

Things were on a roll. Those battle-scarred by 18 years of class war & Thatcherism, sniffed a new radicalism in the air. RTS, and those gathered in their shadow from the direct action campaigns of the early 1990's, brought a new angle to radical politics - the imagery, the words, the PR, the daring & co-ordinated actions. They had plenty of cash too. It got better over the next few years. The badly named (because it was internationalist, just against the global domination of corporate capital) anti-globalisation movement was on the march. Words like 'capitalism', and 'anti-capitalism' re-entered common vocabulary and the media. The cops were being outsmarted. The bosses and state got very worried. The movement was moving.

Back inside

Sadly all new dawns fade. Capital responded with the carrot & the stick. The state got smarter, changed the rules and laws, the cops got nasty. Capital offered concessions, engaging with the large liberal wing of the movement (NGO's & popstars), and the media spin went into overdrive. Organising was harder as harassment increased, numbers dwindled as the drugs, parties & truncheons didn't mix. By 2002 the movement as a mass retreated from the streets save for a tenacious few. We realised that below the head of the movement, there was no body. Unlike say, the traditional labour movement, there was no real commonality, or collective class consciousness, to fall back on. Just a broad swathe of activists, inspired by a variety of causes and ideas; and a load of people up for a party, but not a real challenge to the status quo. The relatively small numbers at the G8 in Scotland were indicative of this.



Mayday 2000 was an International Day of Action. Bristol activists understood the meaning of it by acting locally, with a variety of events in the city. This superb mural was done at J3 M32

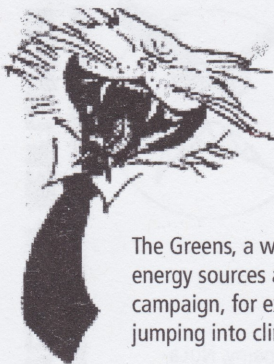
Four big problems

But millions marched in this country against NuLabour's various wars, you may cry. But they only marched. Ignored, they toddled off home disheartened, unprepared to take their opposition up a notch or ten. We face a number of fundamental problems in this country. Firstly, the majority of working people believe they are comfortably off or at least on their way to being so. When push comes to shove, whatever the strength of their feelings on an issue, they are not going to risk it all. Probably deep down they do not believe it is possible to beat the state and capital, even if they wanted to. Nor, with the erosion of collectivity / community / class consciousness, do they trust others to stay the distance with them if they tried. So its heads in the sand time, whilst consuming madly. Secondly, a significant minority, perhaps 30% of the population, have been completely shafted. Reliant on benefits, riven by crime, drugs, vulnerability and fear, encamped in ghettos of misery increasingly controlled by an ever more authoritarian state. Alienated from themselves and each other, yet seduced by the trappings of capitalism, reality TV appears to offer their only real escape. Thirdly, global corporate economic control has increased beyond measure, and is supported by states, such as in the UK, which have enacted masses of legislative powers to keep their people subdued. Fourthly, the numbers of committed, overtly political, long-term activists have decreased. True, Bristol seems alive with activities and campaigns, and amazing events do happen, but the numbers involved are small and are often duplicated. There appears to be a healthy, if ghettoised, scene, but the 'doers' are a small minority compared to those who 'consume' the events. Many have got older, given up, burnt out, been damaged, were only liberal reformists in the first place, or never had a real political understanding to sustain them and returned to their 'normal' lives after a short 'alternative' period



Bristle no. 1 - 1997 - 10 years of covering extra-parliamentary resistance

Things look bleak. Yet at the height of their dominance, capital and the state are in a precarious position. They may face few challenges in the western, or 'first' world, but elsewhere there is massive resistance. They know that shit will happen, there will be a crash in the west as global domination slips over to the likes of China & India, but they are doing all they can to prepare for it. So what can we do, here in Bristol, the south west, the UK? Here are four issues we could deal with.



Greenwashed for profit

We are all green now. Cameron & the Tories, Tesco's and co, BP, HSBC, every corporate scumbag & politician is green. Yeah right! Older Greens think they've had a real impact, but capital has usurped the agenda, so that the big question is how we ensure capitalism (the economy) grows in an environmentally sustainable way. Wrong! The only real question worth asking is: how can we replace capitalism, and what with, before it destroys the planet once and for all?

The Greens, a well-meaning, moralistic bunch, never put such a question on the agenda. Fair trade, organic foods, recycling, green cars, renewable energy sources are all well and good, but they're just niches in the market, ripe for profit. The in many ways excellent Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign, for example, argues that the south west's capitalist economy will do better without a larger airport. Meanwhile, many newer activists are jumping into climate change, the current fave issue. But really it's just a diverting sideshow to the real question.

NVDA - a sign of weakness

At its best NVDA is one of many tactics employed by those engaged in direct action. Presently it's about the only one used. There are three reasons for this. First, it reflects the moralistic liberal beliefs of many of its practitioners. Second, it reflects the state's clampdown on other more energetic forms of action. Third, it's a useful tactic when you are low on numbers, and presently we are very short of bodies. We need to find ways to activate peoples' disillusionment with the way things are, to externalise not internalise their anger. To re-energise peoples' natural hatred for the toffs, the bosses & the politicians. To recreate a full spectrum of opposition, and then really kick off.

Think global, act local

Nice idea, but a bit boring isn't it? All that traipsing around yer neighbourhood talking to locals, getting involved in bread & butter local campaigns and initiatives, fighting the shitty local council's cuts and big businesses taking the piss, trying to demonstrate the validity of anarchist ideas and practices. But its so mundane, you want action, excitement, and to build up your activist CV. So you jet off and be a human shield in the Middle East, or an observer of yet more state fraud & oppression in South America. You might even get to witness a massacre! But you run the risk of giving (unwitting) legitimacy to the likes of Hamas, or FARC, or Chavez, just another bunch of dodgy leaders now or in the future.

International solidarity, seeing the big picture, is important. The hands-on, practical solidarity of groups like Kiptik can only be praised. The bravery required to stand in front of an Israeli bulldozer can only be admired. Much of the rest is just activist tourism taking up time and resources. TGAL was an old slogan renewed in the early 90's. It makes sense, because the only regime change we can hope to bring about is right here.

WANTED - DA VOLUNTEERS!

You've watched the A-Team, now join the DA-Team

Secretive serious clandestine direct action group seeks new members due to burn out, sell out, religious conversion, prison breaks, mortgage commitments, and moving abroad cos that's where its really happening, man.

New volunteers will undergo a six month probation during which they'll make the tea, take informal minutes at infernal meetings, be given the run-around, and be ostracised whilst their background is checked out. The ability to buy large numbers of rounds in the pub whilst organising the NEXT TOP SECRET BIG ACTION is preferred.

Don't contact us, we'll contact you - we know who we want.

<https://paranoid.roundup.net>

"You get these groups of international anarchists, who just wreck the place..." - Blair justifies a police state for the G8 in Scotland, and inadvertently recalls the old anarchist slogan 'We must devastate the avenues of the wealthy'. Damn right!

Info overload

10 years ago most of us were only starting to think of websites & email. There has been a media explosion since, online, in print, multi-channel TV and radio, interactive games. There are thousands of anarchist websites, people with too much spare time (or internet access at work) run up thousands of pointless posts to on-line forums, anyone who thinks they're someone has their own blog (average blog readership - 1). Bombarded with information, most of it irrelevant, we cant see the wood from the trees as we sit alone at home, increasingly alienated and unable to socially interact. We cant organise properly or prepare for meetings, then think we're clever by setting up on-line admin systems for decision making, and just increase the problems and help the state along. The internet is just a tool in the box, not the solution.

A social revolution will not happen online. Get out of the house and on the streets...

History lessons

Important people make history, so we're always told
Generals, presidents, conquerors, kings and queens
of old
But look beyond the facts we're given and the books
we're allowed to see
That they've used to keep us in the dark, to wipe out
our memory
History is re-written by liars, thieves and cheats
But we're the ones who make it - it comes up from
the streets
Sometimes it seems from nowhere, other times well
organised
But insurrection spreads like wildfire when we see
through their lies

They can change colours, go by a different name
But all government's violence just the same

Calls for freedom throughout the ages have always
been met with lead
By murderous governments everywhere piling up
the dead
Whether it's the minions of the market or defenders
of the crown
By sword or club or machine gun fire they've always
put us down
The force of order wastes no time to go in for the kill
Learn the lessons from the past coz our enemies
certainly will
Betrayed, imprisoned, massacred - history gets
repeated
But the struggle for a better world has never been
defeated

They can change colours, go by a different name
But all government's violence just the same

There's no way they'll stamp out our ideas
Though they've been trying for so many years
Though it may seem hopeless and all the odds are
stacked
Every day there's more of us fighting back
To create the sort of world we want to see
Where all government is history

Song lyrics by Spanner

Free Riot Training

R u bored with tedious peaceful protests? Have u got arthritis from lying down on cold country lanes with your arm up a steel tube whilst wearing a damp nappy? Pissed off with getting nicked for, well, doing nothing really? Need to express that righteous anger in a constructive way, but lack the skills?

Then come and have a go, if you think you're hard enough. Every Friday & Saturday from 10pm, Bristol City Centre. Just turn up and have a go with one of our customer service officers, kitted out in their latest S&M party gear.

Projectile vomit available, bring your own bottles & bricks - it's what your right arm's for innit.

www.southwestplod.com

SPRING...into action

by Gnome

Do you **work for free**? The lovely people at Kebele do, because they believe in what they're doing, and nobody is ripping them off as a result. In January the TUC reported that British workers put in **£23billion worth of unpaid overtime in 2006**, an average of £4,800 each, or working free until 23 February 2007. The TUC's response? Suggesting workers took a proper lunch break and left work on time, for one day only, on 23 February. Sod that! Get even - ring in sick, fiddle yer flexi, rip off yer boss. **Live more & work less.**

Speaking of fraud, anyone see those '**No ifs, No Buts**' posters around Bristol that target incorrect benefit claims and ask you to inform on your neighbours? Some clever git calculated the state spends 70 times more targeting benefit fraud than **big business tax evasion**. But the rich cream off 1000 times more than the poor do.

Have you heard the one about the **anti-capitalist**? Who hasn't heard about the links between capital, accumulated wealth, and the **class struggle**? Nah, not funny is it.

A tricky time for **rat lovers**. No, not Blair fans or coppers narks. It's believed (cos who counted?) that **rats outnumber humans** in the UK by about 15 million. They cause around 30% of all building fires by chewing wires. This is down to the privatisation of water & sewage, and the cutbacks in poisoning the little furry lovelies.

So do we join the cull, or **recruit them** and train them to go to Clifton and College Green? As you type out your direct action report just remember, you are never more than a few metres from the nearest rat.



photo by Bristol

Better a rat than a turkey. What with Mad Cow, BSE, **Avian Flu**, and polluted seas, its no wonder people are right off their dead animals. **Vegan or Veggie food**, its 'bootifull'!

A stench of **NIMBY'ism** wafts down from from Horfield way. The chattering classes have bought houses in the area recently as they chase down those 'better' state schools, thereby forcing prices up. Somehow they failed to notice the massive Bristol Rovers stadium, and the attendant parking problems. So when expansion beckoned, they lobbied against it. Lucky for them the olde **Tote End** mob of the 1960's & 70's is no longer about to trash Gloucester Rd, as they did Stapleton Rd back then.

The year started badly for **conspiracy theorists**. The Stevens Inquiry said Lady Di died in a completely innocent car crash, so wear that 'One Less Car' sticker with pride. Then it turns out the 21/7 London bombers were indeed part of an organised **religious extremist conspiracy**, it just wasn't one of Blairs. Things perked up when it turned out the Special Branch were

running **death squads** in Northern Ireland until 2003, so that must have been one Blair was in on. They got better with revelations around the **BAE fraud** enquiries covering Saudi, Czech and other contries. Then Bristle chanced upon our dear **LibDem leader** at <http://barbarajanke.wordpress.com/> and it all became clear! Check it out if its still up...



Car crash gear - get yer sticker from Bristol Cycling Campaign or Kebele Infoshop - only 50p

Terrible to hear of the **environmental damage** to a favourite stretch of East Devon coastline near Sidmouth. A place you could kick back, strip off, have a spliff and a dip...but now end up covered in oil next to rusting consumer goods. We thank the **1000's of locals** who, faced with the destruction of their local economy, went down to the beaches at all hours to remove many of those washed up goods. No thanks to the greedy, selfish, **bastard shipowners and insurers** who have trashed the coastline, or the cops who got in the way.

Early contenders for our **Stop the Developers 2007** award include the GreenbankChocolateBox, Save Castle Park & Stop Bristol Airport Expansion, who have blocked initial planning applications from corporate profiteers. All may need to move from letter-writing & lobbying to in yer face occupations & actions. Could be a fun summer!

If prisons are a **reflection of society**, then ours is a mess. As the prisons overflow, rehabilitation collapses, and state murders increase. With at least 10% of the 80,000+ prisoners vulnerable and/or mentally ill, it is no surprise 67 committed suicide last year. **Women prisoners** have doubled under NewLabour, and **34 have died** in jail since 2004. Three have died since 2005 at Eastwood Park, outside Bristol, including remand prisoner Caroline Powell in January. So much for being innocent until proven guilty. No surprise prisoners leg it when they can.

Massive respect to **Spanish International Brigade** fighter **Howard Andrews** in Taunton, who reached 100 in February. Amazingly he still protests. When the Queen's flunky called to offer a telegram, he replied: "**Me and the royal family haven't been friends for ages.**" We hope all our readers remain active for as long.

Glasto Withdrawal Symptoms?

Missed out on a Glasto ticket this year? Paranoid you didn't look cool enough on your photo ID? Don't fancy tunnelling in and getting stomped by security? Depressed you can't roll in the mud with Kate Moss or The Who? Anxious about how you'll spend all your cash now you can't go?

We can help! Get rid of that spare money by sending us a cheque, and we'll give you absolutely nothing in return - no watery beer; no dodgy drugs, no tent stolen, no portaloo queues, no ageing rock stars, no Glasto belly, no city wankers, absolutely nothing except a sense of relief.

Ashton Court mourners also welcome.

More info: www.festivalsripuoff.corp

Before the war on Iraq in March 2003, protesters from across the south west converged on Fairford Air base, sometimes alone, sometimes in their thousands, whilst the Government turned the surrounding area into a near police state. Having ended up with egg on their face over the Fairford Coach case (see below), the state's attempts to nail any of the 5 pro-peace campaigners who tried to sabotage US Air Force B-52 carpet bombers at Fairford continue.

Samantha Savage reports on the most recent trial.



At the crime scene. But who has committed the bigger crime, Josh or NewLabour?
pic: Sam S

FAIRFORD FARCE FLIES ON

The legal saga surrounding the 'Fairford Five' pro-peace campaigners continues apace. In early February the trial of 33-year-old Easton local and anti-war activist, Josh Richards, at Bristol Crown Court, ended with a hung jury. The prosecution have decided a costly re-trial (set for late May or June) is in the nation's best interests.

How long before poor old Tony wakes up from his self-induced hypnotic trance and smells the fair trade coffee? Four years legal wrangling, three elongated trials, three well hung juries and two million quid later the scales of British justice are wobbling. 'The jury are as divided over this war as much as the population at large', said a Richards' supporters after the jury's indecision. The prosecution, led by a Mr Blair (honest!), looked gutted as they staggered from the courthouse trophy-less. No protesters' scalps for this wig-wearer.

5 GALLONS VERSUS A B52

Blair & the prosecution had managed to get evidence about the legality of war ruled as 'inadmissible' at the House of Lords, but Richards and his defence managed to squeeze in some hard facts about B-52s being used to commit war crimes. Like a bar full of Martinis the jury looked shaken after Richards' disturbing account of how cluster bombs, depleted uranium and carpet-bombing help to inflict massive damage on civilian populations. Sounding like the axe-wielding butler from The Shining, Blair carefully crafted his words describing Richards' attempt to set fire to the wheels of a bomber as 'inept', and accused Richards of 'shoe-horning' the defence of preventing a greater crime from being committed after his arrest. Explaining why he lugged five gallons of petrol across the west country to 'high-light' the threat posed by war, Richards explained: 'We knew war was unlawful, immoral, the whole shebang and I was in a position where I could make an effort to do something against it'.

Richards, whose young family now live in Spain, will face the whole sorry farce again shortly. He remains resolute: 'War is ugly and once you start a war you've got to take full responsibility for everything you unleash'. How is the legal profession expected to react to recent developments? If Judge Tom Crowthers (whose clipped accent reminded many of the Mr Kipling pie adverts) has anything to do with it: Barristers make exceedingly large fees!

Samantha Savage

Countdown to 'justice'

Mar 14 2003: Margaret Jones and Paul Milling arrested at RAF Fairford for damaging planes.

Mar 18 2003: Josh Richards arrested attempting to break into RAF Fairford. Phil Pritchard and Toby Olditch also arrested trying to break into airbase.

Dec 22 2003: Judge at Truro Crown Court refers case to High Court in London.

Jan 12 2004: Pre-trial hearing at Bristol Crown Court - judge declares no discussion of whether act of launching war against Iraq was in itself illegal would be permitted as a defence. Lawyer for all three groups of defendants appeal against this 'non-justiciability' ruling.

May 2004: High Court judge grants accused right to claim they had 'lawful excuse' for their actions, provided they spoke only about whether crimes were committed in the way the war was conducted and not about legality of war itself. Crown appeals decision.

July 21 2004: Appeal Court judges in London rule it is 'not necessary' to consider legality of war in Iraq, for accused to have defence in law. Judges find no 'established rule' defining international crime of aggression by government as being also crime in English law. So accused unable to claim 'preventing the crime of aggression' as basis of defence.

Feb 20 2006: Law Lords debate if there is defence open to individuals who break law in order to prevent greater 'crime of aggression', and if UK courts have authority to consider foreign affairs and defence issues.

Mar 29 2006: Law Lords unanimously rule aggression and crime of attacking another nation is crime in international law, but cannot be said to be part of British domestic law. Therefore impossible for British court to hear argument that war on Iraq was illegal.

Sept 4 2006: Jones and Milling trial begins at Bristol. Case ends with hung jury. Judge orders re-trial.

Oct 5 2006: Pritchard and Olditch trial begins at Bristol. Case ends with hung jury. Judge orders re-trial.

Feb 1 2007: Richards trial begins at Bristol. Case ends with hung jury. Judge orders re-trial.

May ? 2007: Re-trials due to start.



Police state tactics at Fairford on 22 March 2003 when they stopped 3 coaches from getting to the demo. On 13th December 2006 the Law Lords finally ruled that the cops violated the right to freedom of expression and lawful assembly. We fought the law, and WON !

Info at <http://www.fairfordcoachaction.org.uk>

pic: Anon

BRISTOL

RISING TIDE IS BORN

Formed out of and inspired by the Climate Camp last August, Bristol Rising Tide is motivated by the realisation that climate change is underway and those in power are not going to do much more about it than rearrange the deckchairs on the Titanic.

As of January 2007 we are an open, autonomous, grassroots direct-action group: everyone is welcome. We have adopted the People's Global Action Hallmarks affirming our rejection of all systems of domination - Capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and any other -isms that divide and oppress us. We don't believe governments or businesses are going to solve our problems. We are going to have to do it, learning as we go.

“ We don't believe governments or businesses are going to solve our problems. We are going to have to do it, learning as we go. ”

Our interests include aviation, oil/petrol, gas pipelines and Climate Camp.

Airports: We oppose expansion of air travel, specifically the proposed expansion of Bristol Airport. In December 2006 we occupied the lobby of the key decision makers, delivering a giant letter, highlighting the reasons why expansion is a crazy idea and making clear our commitment to taking direct action to stop any expansion.

Petrol stations: Disrupting their smooth operations and exposing the oily exploitative reality behind their slick green-washed exteriors is a favourite pastime. They can't be allowed to fool people that they are part of a sustainable or socially just future. They have played a crucial and deeply cynical role in delaying the climate change debate. We also encourage drivers to think about the links between climate change and personal carbon usage.

Pipelines: National Grid are building a high-pressure gas pipeline through South Wales. We will continue to resist this carbon-intensive project, working in solidarity with local communities whose safety fears have been steamrollered. We support protest camps along the pipeline route and regularly take part in actions to stop work, keeping the issue in the news.

Climate Camp: We are participating in the 2007 Climate Camp which will see hundreds of people coming together to take action on the root causes of climate change, while living collectively and sustainably. More info at <http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/>

Join us: We meet every other Monday, 7.30pm at Kebele. Check Bristol Indymedia for the date of the next meeting and come on down.

Contact us: 07917 383517 // bristol@risingtide.org.
uk // PO BOX 99, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB.

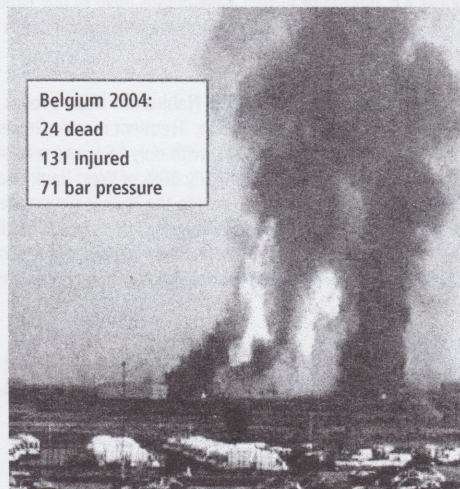
Piping Hot

In Wales the campaign continues against a huge gas pipeline. A fertile mix of local campaigners and activists from around Wales and the South West has been stopping work and hitting the headlines since last November. Like the earth's atmosphere, the campaign is heating up rapidly and recently there have been a spate of arrests. 5 protesters were arrested for aggravated trespass for the heinous crime of having a picnic on a footpath next to the pipe 'construction' site at Trebanos.

At another protest at Milford Haven Liquid Natural Gas Harbour, 5 protesters arrived in the wee small hours and locked themselves together with arm tubes. They blocked lorries from getting into the LNG harbour site for 6 hours.

An accident waiting to happen

The project manager for the terminal, owned by Esso, estimated the cost of the disruption at £1,200,000 a day. If there was an accident it is estimated that 20,000 lives could be at risk from "a highly inflammable cloud several miles long". Each supertanker contains over 50 Hiroshima's worth of explosive power.



Belgium 2004:
24 dead
131 injured
71 bar pressure

The whole project is dangerous for those who will have to live next to it in the shadow of apocalypse. It is also a crazy response to the climate crisis. Talking about gas as a transition fuel is a distraction from what we urgently need: an end to the fossil fuel growth economy and a switch to clean, decentralised, renewable energy.

A protest site has been set up near Brecon on the route of the pipe in beautiful woodland. People who can visit or stay are always welcome and donations of food, money and equipment will be needed. Trees are being felled nearby and an eviction attempt is expected. Come and help defend the camp, and the planet!

For info about the campaign and the camp call: 07931 931563.

By Tom



'Red Indians' at the Huwarra checkpoint, Nablus 14.1.07

Nablus - Hill of Fire

Mirian and Alan spent 9 weeks in Nablus, teaching English and music in Balata Camp and the Old City. Here is their account of life in Nablus and an appeal for help before it is too late.

Daily Life: Nablus is home to 200,000 people, mostly Arab Muslims with small Samaritan (original Jews) and Christian communities who historically have lived peacefully together. Since 1948, Nablus includes 3 refugee camps, the most famous of which is Balata, with a 4th camp forming after the 6-Day War in 1967.

Nablus is an attractive city set in a spectacular steep-sided valley. The Old City is traditional Middle-Eastern style with crowded, narrow souks and beautiful stone archways. Hill of Fire is said to reflect the fiery sunsets, and also the city's reputation for resistance. Nablus is culturally dominated by An Najah University, one of Palestine's largest educational establishments.

Nablus people are overwhelmingly courteous and assertive, with a direct gaze and proud bearing. Despite 40 years of Israeli occupation, they enjoy jokes and witticisms and during the day, the city buzzes with traffic and activity.

At nightfall, the city empties, shops are shuttered. Later, streets echo to sounds of gunfire and occasional explosions as Nablus endures the IDF's nightly invasion. Homes invaded, children's bedrooms used as sniping platforms, students attacked, their studies disrupted. 'Arrests' are frequent and sometimes fatal.

'Nablus is a zoo' (Resident): IDF mountain positions dominate the city and 6 checkpoints block all exits to a large proportion of residents. An emplacement on an outcrop above Balata camp enables IDF to take 'pot-shots' at much of south Nablus. Education, trade, health and family life are strangled by the occupation. 80% of West Bank water is diverted to Israeli use and frequent shortages of essential supplies e.g. gas cause misery. Palestinians have to buy Israeli goods at inflated prices as their commercial infrastructure/agriculture is practically destroyed.

Resistance: Since the Second Intifada in 2000, Nablus has been a focus of resistance to the increasingly brutal occupation. Frequent massive invasions and, in 2002, a curfew which lasted 151 days, with only 65 hours respite have seen 600 Nablus people killed since 2000 (nearly 30% of West Bank deaths - UN figures). Despite the withholding of funds to the Hamas government by Israel, supported by US and EU, and increasing tension between factions on the West Bank, most Nablus people are committed to peaceful resistance. In 2007 there have already been two peaceful demonstrations against the checkpoints, despite arrests.

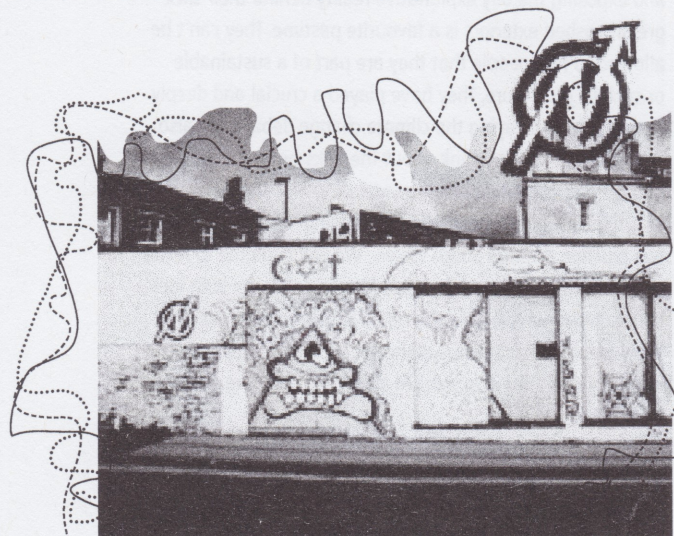
PALESTINE NEEDS YOUR HELP HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE WAYS

Wise up on the Boycott/Disinvestment Campaign:

www.bigcampaign.org.uk. It is supported by many Jews and Israelis and it is not anti-semitic to support it. It worked against Apartheid in South Africa and it can help sort-out Israel's racist and aggressive policies.

Shop local: Many Easton (and Bristol) shops support the Boycott of Israeli goods e.g. Bristol Sweet Mart, Star Cash and Carry, Al Hoggar take-away and Harvest/Essential (Gloucester Road). If you see Israeli goods in any shop, e.g. Carmel products ask them to stop selling them and tell them why!

Don't shop in: Tesco, Sainsbury's and M&S all of whom have Zionist managements and financially support the Zionist project. CAT (Caterpillar) supply military bulldozers to the IDF.



Making use of empty space

Bristol city council is pushing ahead with its yuppiefication of St Pauls, and evicting a number of squats including the famous 'Blue House' on Brigstocke Road. Meanwhile, community-minded squatters have brightened up one drab end of Ashley Road by taking over the decrepit old Salvation Army shop. The new squat offers a range of activities, without any prayers, so check it out and get involved.

- MH

REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW

"Bash The Rich"

by Ian Bone

Published by Tangent Books.

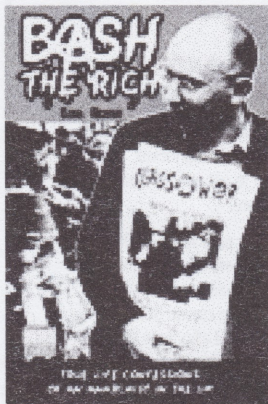
(Just £7 from Kebele's Infoshop)

Anyone inclined to think of the 1980s as simply a decade of New Romantics, yuppies and Margaret Thatcher might be surprised to discover upon reading 'Bash The Rich' that it was in fact a decade of social disorder, class war and er... Margaret Thatcher. And anyone inclined to think of Ian Bone as their worst ever nightmare might be surprised to discover that he is in fact a witty, charming revolutionist of the first order. According that is, to this, his autobiography.

From his curious childhood as the son of a butler, through tribulation and awkwardness of student political hard-life in Swansea to zeitgeist-kicking Class War fruition, Ian cuts a picaresque swath through cynicism, bombast and pretension. Anecdotes and laugh-out-loud tales from the anarchist swampland unfold on every page as a story is woven that is mightily inspirational, consistently hilarious and often quite touching.

The bottling of Neil Kinnock, the Stop The City protests, Crass, the miners' strike, the inner-city riots and of course - Class War. It's all here. Read it. Learn from it. Those who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it. It's your life, so smash and grab it. Stonehenge is still to be avenged. Etc, etc. Ian, his cohorts and fellow travellers - from Lucy Parsons, Victor Serge, Martin Wright, Phil Gard and so on - as conveyed so generously in the book, have blazed a trail for future generations. It is for others now to carry the torch forward - from riot to total insurrection. Five fingers make a fist and fiery words make a weapon. 'Bash The Rich' is a fine and mighty example of this.

- John Serpico.



"Recording Iraq" and "Pale Rider" EXHIBITIONS AT THE Arnolfini

"Recording Iraq" is a collection of various forms of reportage compiled by Michael Burke with support from the Ken Stanton Archive. The focal point is over 200 hours of footage shot by Iraqis in conjunction with Burke. The footage is undeniably powerful in places, but also ultimately unsuccessful at getting a meaningful point across. The sheer volume of footage is daunting, and although Burke's lack of editing and other interference should be applauded, it means the raw footage becomes, well, boring after a while. I found myself constantly fighting my 'riot porn' instincts, jumping sections of mundane 10 minute clips looking for 'action' or confrontation. I was sickened by the slow-pan clips of mutilated bodies, but also found it an unpleasantly voyeuristic experience. What right have I got to sympathise with the mothers of dead Iraqi children when they are dead because of my own failure to stop my country going to war against them? Maybe this is the reaction the exhibition was meant to engender, but I'm not so sure.

"Pale Rider" is much more in the style of the usual 'Analfoni' exhibition, i.e. absolute WANK. It advertises itself as a study of Modernism's uneasy relationship with fascism, but is in fact a study of the wanking arms of middle-class art students who still think that fascism is a 'style' to be flirted with rather than an insidious ideology to be confronted and crushed. My personal favourite was the egotism and fake-mysticism of Mark Lackey's 'Parade' - fascist, wank thyself!

In summary - WANK.

- Boyd

"HOT CHOCOLATE" a Benefit Gig in Support of the Chocolate Box Action Group and a Sustainable Greenbank

(13th January 2007)

Hot Chocolate
a Benefit Gig in Support of the
Chocolate Box Action Group
and a Sustainable Greenbank

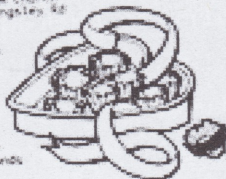
featuring

City of Bristol Dance Group -
dance based on the Chocolate Factory
Eirlys Rhiannon - passionate lyrical singer
Chocolate Sisters - dance cabaret
The Message - soulful blues jazz
Activist Theatre Performance - based on the
chocolate factory campaign
Jettily - smoking jazz

Saturday 13th January 2007 from 8pm
at the United Reform Church
on the corner of Kingsley Rd
and Greenbank Rd
Food & refreshments
available - £10

entry £5.00/
£4.00 concessions

all your turned away
through lack of funds



A fine show of community solidarity and creativity from the residents of Greenbank who organised and attended on this night at the United Reform Church.

An estimated 200 salivating chocoholics appeared from the local area to support the campaign for a community-friendly development on the site of the Elizabeth Shaw Chocolate Factory. Five greedy and chocolate-smearing Bristlers were among them to gobble up the entertainment.

The selection box was torn open with Ale Fernandez and friends playing some Chilean music and an adapted version of Tom Paxton's protest standard 'Little Boxes'.

Eirlys Rhiannon compered and entertained us with a self-penned musical romp round Greenbank - Packers Field and the allotments. A colourful bevy of dancers called Bittersweet engaged in choreographed tiffs, squabbles and reconciliations to an effective backdrop of the same dance taking place within the chocolate factory. An early performance by the Chocolate Sisters added some lively musical confectionary. Sirba stirred in a jazz feel with a heavily improvised version of Woody Guthrie's 'This Land is Our Land'.

The second half of the evening featured Jettily - bittersweet songs from a local duo sporting much envied hair styles. Finally the Message performed with their bluesy guitar and vocals complemented by atmospheric jazz flute oozing sweetly - a feel good, warm and fuzzy end to the evening.

Currently a planning application by Persimmon Homes to demolish the factory and build a housing estate has been rejected by Bristol City Council. The Case Officer's report considered that Persimmon's proposals had several failings including the loss of local employment floorspace, did not satisfy transport requirements, would be an architectural loss to local distinctiveness and was not mindful of the need for open recreational space. Persimmon may now appeal to a Government Inspector. Alternative plans have been devised for a more progressive development that would include conserving much of the original 1901 factory, building affordable housing and providing opportunities for small-scale workshops in keeping with the architecture of the local area. It has also been pointed out that the factory would be an ideal location for a B&B for cyclists.

Dip me in chocolate and throw me to the Greenbankers!!

For further information see:

<http://www.greenbankchocolatebox.org.uk/index.php/HomePage>

- Steve/Petit Pois

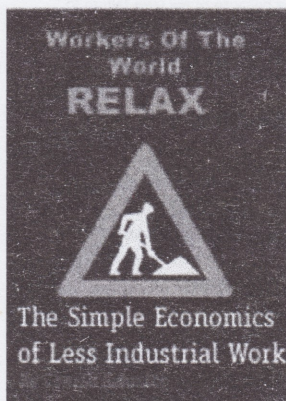
REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW

Workers of the World Relax: The Simple Economics of Less Industrial Work by Conrad Schmidt, 2006

"We are proudly breaking our backs to decrease the carrying capacity of the planet."

Conrad Schmidt, one of the instigators of the World Naked Bike Ride and one of the founders of the Canadian Work Less Party, has written a simple and well-referenced manifesto debunking the myths of classical economics while summoning us all to act now to change consumer society, before the Earth can no longer support our existence.



The economics are simple; if we all do less paid work, we'll have more time for food, gardening, our social networks and direct democracy. This means that we have less need to buy food, clothing, etc... and less need for gas-guzzling cars to get us to work on time or for food transport. We would also have less money to spend on these or luxury items, so there is a greater incentive to learn how to produce any item on a smaller and local scale.

Schmidt is calling for an end to the consumer culture that has been growing since the Depression, a call that will not be well received by those who support the capitalist requirement of ever-increasing profit margins, so it is down to us to support one another in creating alternatives. This book is a good short introduction to an alternative way of living, that may be useful when preaching to the not-yet-converted...

More info: www.worklessparty.org

- Natty G

CD Review:

"Defy The Stars" by Kilnaboy

The largely Welsh folk-punkers Kilnaboy self-released this slice of uplifting music in autumn 2006, and my copy was well worth waiting for. Musically accomplished across many instruments, the songs are well crafted with a mixture of vocal arrangements. Lyrics span the spectrum from traditional folk and love songs to the politically motivated - not many bands name a song after the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta.

To my older ears the band remind me variously at times of The Men They Couldn't Hang, The Waterboys, a touch of Pogues, with the lyrical dexterity of Leon Rosselson. From instrumental jigs & reels to the trad 'Ye Jacobites' & 'Lonigans Ball'; ballads like 'Old Southern Down'; rocking out on 'Raise Your Flag', 'Chocolate Medal Crew' and 'The Knoll'; to what I found to be the heartfelt love song that is 'Moving On'.

Regulars at festivals and benefits (see pic), seen live this band are floor movers. Oh where were you when dreams were born? Probably down the front at a Kilnaboy gig! Catch them when you can.

Info: <http://www.kilnaboy.co.uk>

- MH



HUNT SAB Benefit Gig

The Plough, 24th Feb

First to hit the corner of the new Plough Wine Bar after a quiet time of no DJ's was blatant wizard Clayton Blizzard: a genius cramming many words into short spaces, a straight-edged version of The Streets, no grime, some rhyme - a good local words worth.

Then Tracey Curtis: John Peel fan, mother of 4, self-confessed ex-punk, a song that explains the difficulties of home-teaching about the solar system. Then a song about human rights violations, torture & execution, with a list of the offending countries (it was a very long list!). Honest & frank about now being a folk singer!

Last, headliner, Anarcho-jihadi fundamentalist asiofarian Babur Luck: feminist hunt-sab declaring its easy to attend a benefit gig but its time to get out there 'in the field'! Rants from the crowd, "fuck the hunt", probably a pissed-sab (Mr H!). One love brothers and sisters, all colours, Babur named dropped, yeah The Streets again, & old favourites Crass, and disses for lady Sovereign for being a sold-out blinghead! The crowd danced, got a few to pogo and throw fists in the air, out-spoken, not scared to shake people up - fair play mate. FORWARD & ON! Well worth 4 quid.

- Jim

POEM:

NEXT VICTIM

I dunno what you're sayin (cos I aint no dummier or smarter than you) but anyone can see the cops are packing bigger guns than before, so its probably wiser to stay out of their way. But don't get me wrong - I aint no pacifist. I just aint flashing it around all concealed, know what I mean? I'll quietly carry my flick-knife rather than live a pricks life, mugged, backed up against the wall, emptied pockets, taking my cash, leaving me broke, so I'm left thinking "do I steal off the next bloke?" This kind of poem may have no reason but it does have some rhyme, tho one things for sure - it wont earn me a goddam dime.

- Anon

contacts

PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO LOCAL/REGIONAL GRASSROOTS GROUPS
THAT ARE ORGANIZED ON A NON-HIERARCHICAL BASIS.

Avalon Fair Shares
(Glastonbury LETS scheme)
01458 831118
avalonfairshares@cooptel.net

Avon Organic Group
0117 971 9077
avonorganicgroup@onetel.com

Bath Cycle Campaign
01225 483223
info@bathcyclingcampaign.org.uk
www.bathcyclingcampaign.org.uk

Bath Stop the War Coalition
www.bathstopwar.org.uk
Postmaster@bathstopwar.org.uk

Bath Activists Network
bathactivistnet@yahoo.co.uk
www.myspace.com/bathactivistnetwork

Bristol Animal Rights Collective 07724 077505
barc@hotmail.co.uk

Bristol Area Concern
(Group set up to seek effective consultation with
the planners and developers of the proposed Arena
complex at Temple Meads)
0117 904 3461
www.bristolarenaconcern.org.uk
amrogers@blueyonder.co.uk

Bristol Campaign Against Arms Trade
http://www.bristolcaat.org.uk
perlofreeman@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Colombia Solidarity Group
www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk
bristolcolombiasolidarity@gmail.com

Bristol Critical Mass
http://bristolcm.pbwiki.com/

Bristol Cycling Campaign
www.bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk
info@bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk

**Bristol Defend the Asylum
Seekers Campaign**
0117 944 1481
www.asylumbristol.org.uk
asylumbristol@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Genetix Group
6 The Manor House, Park Lane, Bristol BS2 8BE
0117 927 6322

Bristol Housing Action Movement
0783 310 0399

Bristol Indymedia
submit your own news and use the
calendar to list events
bristolindymedia@hust.com
http://bristol.indymedia.org
(Also UK Indymedia - http://www.indymedia.org)

Bristol Palestine Solidarity Campaign
0117 941 3135
witenagemot2@tiscali.co.uk
www.palestinecampaign.org

Bristol Peace Vigil
(City Centre opp. Hippodrome:
Mon-Fri 5.30-6.30pm; Sat 3-4pm)
bristolpeacevigil@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Permaculture Group
0117 955 3959
Bristol_permaculture@yahoo.co.uk
www.bristolfoe.org.uk/bpg

Bristol Prisoners' Support Group (ABC)
www.geocities.com/bristol_abc
bristol_abc@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Radical History group
www.brh.org.uk/
brh@brh.org.uk

Bristol Rising Tide (Climate Action)
07917 383517
http://risingtide.org.uk/bristol
Bristol@risingtide.org.uk

Bristol Skill Share
(post requests for skills you need or would like to learn;
offer skills you could teach to other people)
bristolskillshare@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Social Forum
(email-based forum for local activists to post up their
activities)
bristolsocialforum@yahoo.co.uk
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bristolsocialforum

Bristol Stop the War Coalition
bristolstopwar@hotmail.com

Bristol Temporary Autonomous Artists
taa_bristol@hotmail.co.uk
www.bristolinsurgentart.co.uk

Bristol Venezuela Solidarity Group
venezuelasolidarity.org.uk/ven/web/bristol/bristol.html
karenbell50@hotmail.com

BUM - Bridgwater Underground Media
(Much more than just a free local news sheet)
http://bridgwater-underground-media.741.com
medialiberationlab@yahoo.co.uk

Cannabis in Avalon
(campaigns for environmental benefits of hemp)
01458 833236
PO Box 2223, Glastonbury BA6 9YU
www.cannabis.uk.net

**Castle Cary contact for Genetics
Engineering Network**
01749 860689
louise@ukonline.co.uk

Common Voice
(Electronic Journal of Non-Market, Anti-State Ideas)
www.cvoice.org
worldincommon@blueyonder.co.uk

The Cube Cinema
Dove Street South (Off Kings Square), Bristol BS2 8JD.
0117 907 4190
www.cubecinema.com
cubeadmin@microplex.cubecinema.com

Dwell Well
(Support for low-impact housing and
sustainable lifestyles)
0845 4581497
www.dwellwell.org
enquiries@dwellwell.org

Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls
www.eastoncowboys.org.uk
general@eastoncowboys.org.uk

Eco-Village Network UK (EVNUK)
PO Box 1410, Bristol BS99 3JP
0117 373 0346

Euskal Info
(Basque Information)
www.euskalinfo.org.uk
euskalinfo@kebele.com

**Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways
(FOSBR)**
07817 885131
www.fosbr.org.uk
severnbeach@hotmail.co.uk

Glastonbury GE Group
01458 834787

Graphic Attack
(subverts and art)
www.graphicattack.org.uk
info@graphicattack.org.uk

Kebele Kulture Projekt
14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY.
0117 939 9469
www.kebelecoop.org
kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net

Kiptik (Zapatista Solidarity Group)
www.kiptik.buz.org
kiptik@buz.org

The Land
(South west based land rights mag)
01460249204
http://www.tlio.org.uk

Leftism
(Dance nights for local causes)
The Crown, Bathwick
http://www.leftism.co.uk
mike@leftism.plus.com

Libcom.org
(Anarchist & libertarian newswire, resource & forums,
including for south west)
www.libcom.org

Mapuche International Link
0117 927 9391
www.members.aol.com/mapulink

The Pitchfork
(Non-Corporate A4 free information newsletter for the
West Country)
The-Pitchfork@hotmail.com

Solidarity Bristol
(part of anarchist-syndicalist Solidarity Federation)
http://www.solfed.org.uk
solidaritybristol@operamail.com

Somerset Against GE
01749 813787

South Wales Anarchists
(linking anarchists from Gwent, Cardiff and beyond)
http://cardiff.revolt.org/
cardiffanarchists@riseup.net
gwentanarchists@yahoo.co.uk

South West Scratch the Surface Forum
(online forum for punk, ska and beyond)
www.scratchthesurface.co.uk

Spanner
Bristol's top anarcho-ska-punk band
www.spannerintheworks.net

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion
http://www.nobristolairportexpansion.co.uk/
email@stopbia.com

SWAN Network
PO Box 70, Newport, NP1 0Y

Swindon Against GMOs
01793 790438
sbriley@gn.apc.org

Transform Drug Policy Foundation
0117 941 5810
http://www.tdpf.org.uk
info@tdpf.org.uk

"YOUR ANARCHO-ANTI-
GLOBALISATION-THINK-GLOBAL-ACT-
LOCAL-DIRECT-ACTION MAGAZINE
WITH GOOD LISTINGS OF LOCAL
CAMPAIGNING GROUPS." (CHEERS
TO IAN BONE, THE NAKED GUIDE TO
BRISTOL, P. 109).

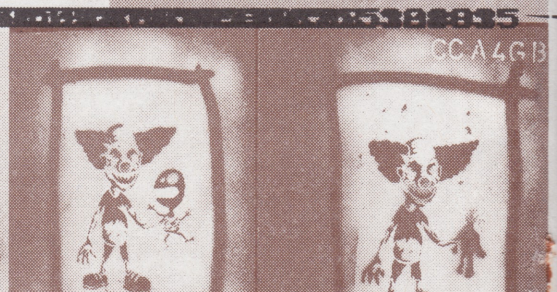
staying active can help a bad back

Whatever your job look after your back
betterbacks.hse.gov.uk



CAR CULTURE IS KILLING US.

Live by the bun Die by the bun

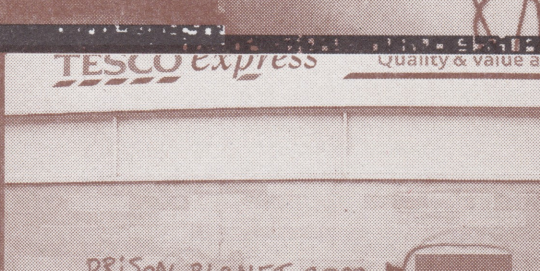


I keep quiet about making a few extra bribes it doesn't make me a hypocrite.

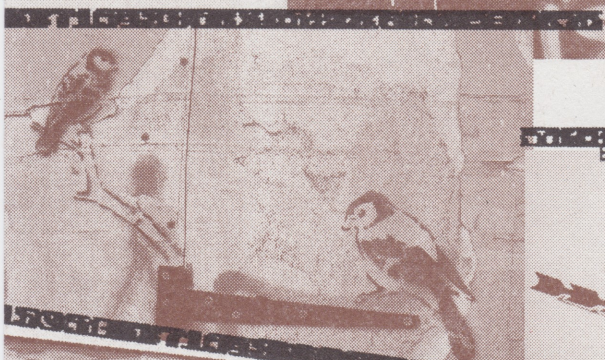
NO IF'S, NO BUTS. NO DODGY ARMS DEALS
Corruption is a crime, break the law and you face a criminal record.

bristle 24 local street art

RESPECT



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Squatters